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THE REFORMATION IN NORTHERN ENGLAND

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THE REFORMATION IN NORTHERN ENGLAND

SIX LECTURES

BY

J. S. FLETCHER

Fellow of the Royal Historical Society
Member of the Yorkshire Archæological Society

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THE REFORMATION IN NORTHERN ENGLAND

I

THOMAS CROMWELL AND HIS AGENTS

1. Whoever has travelled widely in the North of England, keeping an observant eye on its ecclesiastical architecture, must needs have noticed on the façades of the churches and chapels of the various dissenting communions, ascriptions or dedications, whichever they may be, whose very look seems strange to the eyes of the Christian. Strange—because, if words mean anything, they suggest an origin which cannot be otherwise than Judaic. Now the name that confronts one is Sion; now Bethel; now Ebenezer; something in these appellations, it is obvious, strikes a chord in the hearts of those who choose them which would not be struck by a dedication to Our Lady, or to St. Paul, or to St. Peter, or to All Hallows, or to distinctively Northern English saints like Wilfrid of Ripon or John of Beverley. But now and then one finds this strange devotion to Judaism departed from in favour of something that at any rate savours, in some degree, of Christianity. There are meeting-

houses over which the name of the immortal tinker of Bedford is deeply graven on plinth or architrave, and chapels on which those of Wesley and Whitefield appear in bold characters. And there is yet another name, still more frequently met with in this connection in the North of England, which has a peculiar significance; the name of Wycliffe. It is impossible to doubt that the people who, so to speak, dedicate their places of worship to Wycliffe, do so under the impression that Wycliffe, so often spoken of and written about as the Morning Star of the Reformation, was a particularly bright and shining luminary in the Northern lands, and that he, more than any other, shed the compelling light of truth among the Northern peoples. Now all that is sheer nonsense. Wycliffe was undoubtedly a North-countryman, born at or near the village in Teesdale which still bears his name: probably he took his name from the village. But he left his native parts at an early age, for the vastly different atmosphere of Oxford, and there is no record that he ever returned to them; certainly he never returned to disseminate in those regions the particular opinions and doctrines associated with his name. Nor is there the least evidence that the Wycliffian doctrines and opinions were in any way known in Northern England in Wycliffe's own time, nor that they had spread to Northern England during the next two hundred years after Wycliffe's death, nor that up to the end of the sixteenth century the people of Northern England as a whole had any wish

to embrace them. Mr. Trevelyan, in his *Age of Wycliffe*, has settled that point once for all; the Northern counties had no share in Wycliffism, Lollardy, or any like movements. Northern England at the beginning of the sixteenth-century troubles was wholly and purely Catholic; its peoples resisted the new ideas with all the strength at their command, and twice took up arms in defence of their own opinions; the faith which was in them was only crushed out of them, after bitter struggling, by force, fraud, and calculated persecution. Not one man in a thousand favoured the suppression of the monasteries; not one in ten thousand the sack and spoliation of the parish churches; not one in twenty thousand the introduction of the new liturgies. When Sir Ralph Sadler in his famous letter of December 1569 said "There be not in all this (north) country ten gentlemen that do favour and allow of Her Majesty's proceedings in religion, and the common people be ignorant, full of superstition, and altogether blinded with the old Popish doctrine," he voiced the truth in a much more outspoken manner than was common amongst Elizabethan agents. Sandys, Archbishop of York, spoke the truth, too, when, complaining of his poor success in promulgating the new doctrine, he said "A more stiff-necked, wilful, or obstinate people did I ever know or hear of!" They were all this—obstinate, wilful, stiff-necked. Why? Because whatever London, nearer the Continent and the Lutheran and Calvinist influences of the Continent, might want,

whatever the South of England, subject to London and to the same influences of Wittemburg and Geneva, might want, the North of England, rightly or wrongly (it is not a question we are going to discuss, or are, except indirectly, concerned with), was, to a man, against the movement which, for lack of a precise name, we still call the Reformation, and the Northern peoples of that day, so far from being ready to honour Wycliffe, would cheerfully have burned him and all his fry, had they been alive and tangible, at any time between the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, when their own period of persecution began, and the death of Queen Elizabeth, when that persecution had become firmly established by law. In the bitter, bloody, disgraceful controversies of the sixteenth century, Northern England stood four-square and solid for the faith of its fathers.

2. It is difficult, after the lapse of three hundred years, to realize the sufferings which the Catholic peoples of the Northern Province endured or succumbed to in the course of that sixteenth century. We have become so indoctrinated, so permeated, so possessed by the misrepresentations of prejudiced popular history, written by paid partisans in defence of political Protestantism, that many of us find it hard to understand the actual condition of things at the time of the Reformation. It has become an accepted tradition that our forerunners of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were weary of their religion, and gladly welcomed the upheaval under Henry VIII

and his daughter Elizabeth. There was no such weariness and no such gladness in the North of England, whatever there may have been in certain districts of the South. The changes effected in the Northern Province during the sixteenth century were accomplished in direct opposition to the will of the people. Democracy was weak in those days, and Tudorism, as a system, meant unqualified tyranny. Behind and beneath all the surface work, the doings of Henry VIII and his ministers, the doings of Elizabeth and her ministers, the ceaseless chicanery of the negotiations with Rome, the backstairs work with Rome and France and Spain, the shiftings, evasions, and lies of statesmen and churchmen on both sides, remains, almost voiceless, the vast body of the sufferings, persecutions, martyrdom of the humble folk who were as pawns in the great game. Let us summarize not by any means all, but something of what the people of the North saw between the years 1530 and 1592, the sixty years which, in the reforming era, were of critical importance. They saw the time-honoured connection between England and Rome severed, hopelessly, without one honest attempt to bring about a reasonable adjustment of relations which, though admittedly difficult, were by no means impossible of maintenance. They saw the universality, the common brotherhood, of Christendom exchanged for a narrow and an isolated nationalism. They saw the religious houses turned into haunts of the owl and the bat, and their inmates thrown on the

world to starve. They saw the parish churches in which they took such pride stripped of their beauty, the services shorn of their dignity, or done away with altogether. They saw the money which their fathers had left for pious purposes torn from its owners and flung into the laps of the King's women. They saw the schools closed, and education put back a hundred years. They saw charity scorned, and poverty, for the first time in the history of the English race, constituted a legal crime. They saw their leaders suffer death for their faith: sometimes it was by the executioner's axe, sometimes by the hangman's rope: sometimes by the knife of the legal murderer, who, after disembowelling his victim, tore out that victim's heart and flung it in his face in the name of King Henry or of Queen Elizabeth. And they saw the imposition of penal laws such as no country had ever known; laws that for cruelty and injustice are unparalleled in the history of civilization. Those laws constituted the religion of their fathers and of themselves a crime, and thousands of them suffered imprisonment and torture and death beneath their arbitrary administration. The horrors of the Marian Persecution of 1553–58 fade into insignificance when compared with the Elizabethan barbarities of 1570–90. According to S. R. Maitland's carefully compiled list, two hundred and seventy-seven people suffered death for their religious opinions under Queen Mary; it is a significant fact, to be noted in passing, that of these martyrdoms, only two took

place in the North of England. That, we all agree, was two hundred and seventy-seven too many—but Queen Elizabeth put to death at least five hundred North-countrymen, mostly folk of humble life, in a very short time, immediately after the Northern Rebellion, to say nothing of what she did in the next twenty years. Excuses are made for her by the partisan historians where none are made for her sister. No excuse can be made for either. We need go no further in that matter than to a repetition of the sound judgment of Hallam: "In no possible case can it be justifiable for the temporal power to intermeddle with the private devotions or doctrines of any man."

3. But in considering the resistance of the northern populations to the Tudor policy in ecclesiastical affairs, and in dwelling upon the sufferings of the common people which followed on that resistance, do not let us run away with the mistaken idea that these people were altogether right, and that no reform of the Church was needed. Reform was needed at that time, and urgently needed, and not merely reform of the Church but of the whole fabric of society. Even the most conservative element in the Church were aware of this urgent need; that is proved by the proceedings of the Council of Trent, and by the work which took place under the Counter-Reformation. In England there was a vast refuse-heap of abuses which it needed strong arms to rake together, sweep up, and cast into the fire. To estimate

the quality and quantity of the reform needed one has only to get at an accurate idea of Church and Society on the eve of the reforming movement. There is an excellent summary of such an idea in Mr. R. S. Arrowsmith's recent book, *The Prelude to the Reformation*: "The Church in England at the close of the Middle Ages was immensely rich and immensely powerful; it had vested interests of enormous value; its prelates still occupied the highest positions in the State; its clergy formed a large, powerful, and almost independent caste; its bishops and abbots dominated the House of Lords. In spite of flagrant abuses it was still doing much good work, was possessed of considerable vitality, and still played a great part in the life of the nation. Money was still given with all the generosity of a former age for school or college or guild or parish church. Religious books were being multiplied. Heresy, though alive, was quiescent. Nor were the more high-minded churchmen altogether blind to the signs of the times. Reform was in the air. Synod after synod condemned the ecclesiastical abuses of the age and suggested remedies. The best churchmen tried hard to make things better, but the evil was too deep-seated to be remedied in a day, being the result of a long period of demoralization and decline. The truth is that the Church of the fifteenth century had been thoroughly corrupted by the degeneracy of the times, and that it had not risen superior to its surroundings. The history of the later Middle Ages in England is the history of decline—decline in

literature, in learning, in architecture; decline in chivalry, in morals, in ideals; decline in all that was noblest and most inspiring in the best period of the Middle Ages. The ideals of the thirteenth century had long since vanished. The charm and the romance had departed, and war and pestilence had done their fatal work. England had been brutalized and demoralized by a long period of civil strife; by contending factions butchering and proscribing their opponents; by the fierce strife of rival claimants contending for the throne; by the failure of constitutional government; by the lawlessness which, as the *Paston Letters* show us, often made life intolerable for the poor and weak; and unfortunately, the Church, instead of trying to correct the evil tendencies of the times, degenerated under the influence of the demoralization of the age. Indeed, the Church had some responsibility for these troubles. It had been foolish enough to encourage the military ambition of Henry V and to give its blessing to his unholy war with France. A terrible nemesis overtook it. When the Church allies with the world it may achieve a momentary success, but it cannot in the long run escape Divine retribution, and in its loss of spiritual influence and its growing unpopularity the Church was rightly punished for its support of a war which brought untold miseries both to France and to England. It spoke with diminished force; it acted with a lowered prestige; and in spite of much energy and zeal, in spite of its highly organized system, in spite of its

good works, it failed—failed to use its great opportunities, failed to correct its own abuses, failed to hold up to society a high standard of spiritual life."

4. I think no one—certainly no conscientious student of ecclesiastical history—will dispute the arguments and conclusions in this passage. Reorganization, readjustment, perhaps restatement, certainly general reform, were absolutely necessary in the Church, and through the Church, in society, if the world was to be cleaned up, polished bright, and set going again. We all know what happened. It need not have happened. Root-and-branch destruction is not reform. True reformers are not extremists; they are reasonable people; they exercise common sense; they know the virtues of accommodation, and the unassailable strength of compromise. Reformation could have been effected in England without stripping off the roofs of religious houses, and melting the plate of parish churches, and robbing the ecclesiastical corporations of what rightly belonged to them; there was no need to expose all the dirty linen that was so liberally exhibited, and none to play with the common people as if they were sheep, to be driven into first this fold and then that. One great man, endowed with sense and vision, able to see a thing from every angle, not afraid of giving way on one point and making a stern stand on another, could have effected a real and lasting reform in the Church had he been given a free hand. And in England, and in Northern England, in 1530, there was such a man—Cardinal

Wolsey. Wolsey had come to his Archbishopric of York, and since his coming he had shown himself a model bishop. Freed of the cares and responsibilities of the statesman, he had turned to his duties of the churchman, and had quickly made it evident that he meant to be a faithful shepherd of the sheep. The untiring energy which he had displayed as the chief minister of Henry was eclipsed by the arduous labours that he took upon himself as ruler of the Northern Province. And it must be borne in mind that Wolsey, probably the ablest man that our race has ever produced, was essentially a reformer of the type that was really needed. He had been a reformer of the common-sense order during the whole of his career. He was a friend of the new learning; he had communed with More and Grocyn, Linacre and Colet; the splendour of his foundations at Oxford and at Ipswich are proof of his advocacy of sound education. He was far in advance of his time; had he lived under the reign of an enlightened king, and been given liberty to carry out his designs, Wolsey would have wrought a reformation, but it would not have been that of Cranmer and Cromwell, nor of Caraffa and the Council of Trent. But it might have been one on which Erasmus would have set the seal of his unqualified approval.

5. But Wolsey disappears from the scene: we see him carried away from Cawood on that November evening of 1530, and we see him no more, and hear little of his last dolorous journey until it comes to

an end at Leicester, where he sinks wearily from his palfrey and tells his hosts that he has come to lay his bones amongst them. The bones are laid, and Wolsey is no longer a possible factor in Church and State. And in the years immediately following his death, things go from bad to worse in State, and from worse to well-nigh irremediable in Church. The King worries the Pope about his wretched matrimonial difficulties : the Pope keeps one anxious eye on him, and the other on an equally dangerous King of Spain. Cranmer appears—Cranmer, prince of waverers and master of perfect English : Cranmer, the Mr. Pliable of the drama, who laid the foundations of the most incomparable liturgy in the world, and whose eventual recantation was, as Macaulay says, in strict accordance with the system on which he had constantly acted. The universities of Europe are plagued to death by questions about Henry's marriage : is he lawfully espoused to Katharine, or is he free to marry Anne Boleyn ? Little by little the rift between Henry and the Papacy widens : it grows wider than the lands and seas that separate England from Italy. And suddenly an Englishman who has become Italianized in the worst way, and is a greater exponent of opportunism than his master Machiavelli, appears on the scene, and with a quiet whisper in his sovereign's ear transforms the rift into a chasm. Wolsey has made his exit, once for all : Thomas Cromwell steps on the stage.

6. The Tudor time is remarkable for its bad men,

and for the parts these men played in the upheaval of their day. Cranmer was not a bad man, though he was a weak one, and not above a certain species of deceit and duplicity. Bale was not a bad man, though he was scurrilous and foul of mouth. But Riche was bad, and Norfolk was bad, and Somerset was bad, and Cecil was of the sort that can readily be one thing to-day and another to-morrow in the cause of self-interest. Not one of the luminaries of the English Reformation, no, not even the martyrs, Ridley, Hooper, Latimer, were wholly estimable persons : there was that in the general atmosphere which was all-corrupting. It may seem irreverent, blasphemous even, to some over-sensitive people to say it, but one cannot refrain from saying that if the Reformation was the work of a Divine Power, that Power, in Its inscrutable wisdom, made use of some very vile instruments for Its purpose. But when we have recognized that Somerset was a murderer, and Bale a libeller and slanderer, and Riche thoroughly corrupt, and if we could mould Riche and Bale and Somerset into one personality, and add to that all the wickedness of Norfolk and the worst characteristics of Cranmer, we should still be a long way from any near approach to the incarnation of evil in the person of Thomas Cromwell. It is amazing that within the last hundred years, at least two attempts, serious attempts, have been made to whitewash him. To be sure, those attempts were made before a really reliable life of him was given to the world, and accompanied

by his letters. But who, studying Mr. R. B. Merriman's scholarly volumes, can doubt that Cromwell was bad from husk to kernel? He was the prince of opportunists; he had no ideals; it is questionable if he had any religion; he served the time; mercy was unknown to him; he was grasping and extortionate; a lie came readily to his lips when it served him to lie; he would have made a bargain with the devil cheerfully if he had only believed in the devil, and been satisfactorily convinced that the devil had any earthly power; well might Green call him the most terrible figure in our history. Yet, in this man's hands the fortunes of the Church in England rested for years, and at the most critical period she has ever known.

7. It is difficult (for we have no means of knowing precisely) to get at an accurate estimate of the nature of Cromwell's first dealings with Henry VIII. We know how he gained the ear of his sovereign, and that within a comparatively short time after Wolsey's death, Cromwell was Henry's most trusted adviser. We know that the concerted attack on the Church sprang out of some suggestion of Cromwell's, but we do not know the exact nature of the suggestion. I do not think it had anything to do with the divorce affair; Henry and Cranmer had settled that matter between them. Nor do I think that it sprang from the gradual and now rapidly widening estrangement with the Papacy; my belief is that it was wholly and entirely a question of money. By 1530, perhaps long

before, Henry, most extravagant of English sovereigns, had not only got through the millions left to him by his thrifty father—Stubbs credits Henry VII with having left £1,800,000—but also through the liberal supplies extorted at various times from commons and clergy by Warham, Wolsey, and More. About 1530 he was, in my opinion, at his wit's end for money: I believe he turned to Cromwell, a smart and crafty business man, for financial advice; I believe that Cromwell coolly pointed to the Church. We have just heard what Mr. Arrowsmith says: that the Church was at that time immensely wealthy; the Church was; we cannot even guess at the amount of her wealth. And as I read Thomas Cromwell's character, I cannot conceive of him as doing anything else than pointing both hands to the Church and bidding his Prince to help himself. "Here, good my lord, at your grace's feet is the richest Church in Europe! She sends vast sums every year to the Pope: take them to yourself! Her cathedrals and churches are bursting with treasure: appropriate it! Her monks and nuns are holders of rich meadows, fat corn lands, horses and cattle, swine and sheep, lead mine and stone quarry; lay hold on all! What! has not your Highness heard that a certain Pope called this English Church the milk-cow of the Papacy? Oh, my lord, it is your grace's cow! why not milk your cow for yourself? Sir, ye shall be the richest king that ever was in Christendom!" There is small stretch of imagination here—you can see

Cromwell's sinister smile and suave lips and hear his soft, silky voice, and you can see, too, the rising greed in the eyes of the King who, not so very long before, had shown childish pride and high delight because the Pope, whom he was now invited to cheat of at any rate some just dues, had hailed him Defender of the Faith.

8. Events came crowding thick and fast in those early years of the Cromwell influence, and especially in matters of legislation. There were, of course, other matters: history, in those days, was made rapidly. There was the acknowledgment by the clergy of the King's supremacy—with a qualification—in 1531; and the submission of the clergy in 1532. 1533 witnessed the secret marriage of Henry and Anne Boleyn; the coronation of Anne as Queen; the sentence at Rome, declaring Henry's first marriage valid, and the birth of the child who grew up to be Queen Elizabeth. In 1535 More and Fisher went to the block on Tower Hill, and the monks of the Charterhouse were put to death—" ripped up," says Gairdner, " in each other's presence, their arms torn off, and their hearts rubbed upon their mouths and faces." In the following year Anne Boleyn herself laid her head on the block, and on the day of her death the accommodating Cranmer, now Archbishop of Canterbury, granted the King a dispensation to marry Jane Seymour, of which dispensation Henry lost no time in availing himself. Meanwhile the legislators had been busy. If you will turn to Gee and Hardy's *Documents Illustrative of English Church*

History you will find that no documents are cited between 1455 and 1532 : that of 1455 was Archbishop Bouchier's Commission for Reforming the Clergy. But between 1532 and 1534 there are fourteen documents : in 1532 the Petition of the Commons, the Answer of the Ordinaries, the Submission of the Clergy, and the Conditional Restraint of Annates ; in 1533 the Restraint of Appeals ; in 1534 the Submission of the Clergy and Restraint of Appeals, the Ecclesiastical Appointments Act, the Act forbidding Papal Dispensations and the Payment of Peter's Pence, the First Act of Succession, the Supremacy Act, the Second Act of Succession, the Treasons Act, the Abjuration of Papal Supremacy by the Clergy, and the Suffragan Bishops' Act. All these have more or less bearing on our subject, but none are quite so intimately pertinent to it as certain legislature that took place late in 1534, or early in 1535, relative to the powers of Thomas Cromwell. Somewhere about that time—the dates are confusing, but the documents themselves may be seen at the Public Record Office amongst the State Papers of Henry VIII—two commissions were issued to Thomas Cromwell. One, the first, was addressed to him as Chief Secretary, to Dr. John Tregonwell, Principal Judge of the Admiralty, and to Thomas Bedyll, Archdeacon of London, empowering them to make a general visitation of churches and monasteries. The second document is curious, inasmuch as it is a direction by Cromwell, as Chief Secretary and Master of the Rolls, to himself,

to make the same enquiry. This is probably the real authority, as Gee and Hardy point out, for the statement that Cromwell held the office of Vicar-General; a copy of a draft commission to a similar effect, in which Cromwell is actually styled Vicar-General, is in the British Museum. Early in 1535 then, Thomas Cromwell had been invested with full powers to deal with the Church.

9. Now in endeavouring to arrive at a truthful estimate of the visitation work done in connection with the northern monasteries, we must begin by remembering that Thomas Cromwell, in addition to being the most unscrupulous statesman that England has ever known, was also a perfect master of the spy system. No man was safe under the Cromwell régime. "Early in 1532," says Mr. Merriman, "Cromwell began to create a system of espionage, the most effective that England had ever seen, that in a short time was to render unsafe the most guarded expression of dissent in politics or religion. The success which this organized method of reporting treason later obtained, is one of the most striking proofs of the relentless energy of its originator." Equally successful was Cromwell in all the rest of his propaganda work; in his manipulation of the Press; in his encouragement of the makers of scurrilous and ribald ballads satirizing and abusing the old religion, and in his trafficking with those discontented religious whom he bribed, liberally, to write defamatory letters. Is it likely that such a man, entrusted with an enquiry into the

condition of the religious houses, had any desire to ascertain the real truth about their status or the character of their inmates ? We know from unassailable evidence that Cromwell had not ; his job was to gain his own ends, which meant the seizure of all monastic property on behalf of the Crown. This, of course, was merely a first step in the grand scheme of spoliation : Cromwell had doubtless thought it well out before he initiated the gradual beginnings. First the religious houses ; they would yield so much. Then the hospitals, chantries, pious foundations ; they would yield so much. Finally, the cathedrals, collegiate churches, parish churches ; they would come last, and perhaps be not least productive. And the first thing to do was to employ men as visitors of the religious houses who could be trusted to make bad reports of them, so bad that the Crown would be justified in seizing on their goods and turning their inmates adrift.

10. Before we consider the character of the two men whom Cromwell sent as visitors into the Northern Province, let us briefly consider his own as a profiteer in those times of upheaval. Cromwell was a nobody to start with—the son of a drunken, law-breaking ale-seller at Wimbledon. He himself lived an adventurous, and, by his own confession, an ill-behaved life in his younger days. There is a good deal of mystery about those days ; he is said to have been a soldier in Italy ; certainly he was well acquainted with the Italian qualities of craft, cunning, and

subtlety, and with the principles of Machiavelli. But wherever he spent his young-man time, he was back in England, and practising as a solicitor in London, about the year 1512. Eight years later he appears to have attracted the notice of Wolsey, and he was certainly employed by Wolsey in one capacity or another up to the time of Wolsey's first fall. Wolsey's disappearance from the chief centre of things signalizes Cromwell's entrance to it. For several years he was Henry's right-hand man, much as Henry seems to have despised him. And during those years, and especially while he was actively engaged in suppressing the religious orders, Cromwell did very well for himself. Between 1531 and 1533 he received the appointments, and held them in conjunction, of Privy Councillor, Master of the Jewels, Clerk of the Hanaper, Master of the King's Wards, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Principal Secretary to the King; between 1533 and 1539 he received no fewer than sixteen minor appointments, all to places of profit. In 1536 he was made Lord Privy Seal, and raised to the peerage as Baron Cromwell; in 1537 he became a Knight of the Garter; not long before his fall he was created Earl of Essex. There was a good deal to be got out of, or consequent upon, these honours and appointments, but nothing compared to what his hands stuck to as the church properties came within their greedy grip. There is in the Record Office an account book of his steward, Thomas Avery, which shows how widely his net was cast, and how

liberally it was filled. Bribes and presents were showered upon him. Cranmer gave him £40 a year. The Prior of St. Swithin's, Winchester, sent him £300; the Abbot of Evesham £266; the Prior of Rochester £100. Marmaduke Bradley, intriguing for the Abbacy of Fountains, offered him 600 marks for his interest, cash down. The Abbot of Pipewell bribed him with £200; the monks of Colchester offered him £2,000 to leave them alone. And Marmaduke Bradley was not the only monk who tried to buy an abbacy from the all-powerful Vicar-General; there were monks at Guisborough, and at Whitby, and at Vale Royal, who followed Bradley's example, and were evidently in possession of that ready money which Thomas Cromwell so loved. But it was not only money—there was land. He got several monastic properties; Lound, in Leicestershire; Yarmouth, in Norfolk; Alcester, in Warwick; St. Osyth's, in Essex; Moderham, in Kent; Michelham and Lewes, in Sussex. These he had by grant; he got other monastic lands by private bargain. That he was immensely wealthy towards the end of his career is undoubted; the records prove that he was spending as much as £10,000 a year, an enormous sum for those days, and was laying out much money on gold plate and precious stones and luxurious furniture and fine clothes. And, according to a statement in the Calendar of State Papers, when the King's Archers, under Mr. Cheyney, went to Cromwell's house, after his arrest, for the purpose of making an inventory, they found there not only

a sum of £7,000 in money, but what is described as an immense amount of Church plate, quietly transferred, no doubt, from the Lord's altars to Thomas Cromwell's cupboard. This is the man whom Foxe, the martyrologist, calls "that valiant Soldier and Captain of Jesus Christ!"

11. Now let us cast a glance at the gentlemen whom Thomas Cromwell sends into the North of England to visit the religious houses. We can look at them now as full-length figures, having their records before us. There are two of them: Thomas Legh, Richard Layton. I do not know of any serious historian who has ever had one good word to say of either; even Froude in his general whitewashing of the sixteenth-century spoliators, is bound to admit that Legh and Layton were insolent, rough, and corrupt. But a writer in the *Athenæum*, reviewing the issue of *Letters and Papers: temp. Henry VIII*, volume 9, in 1886, sums up the characters of these two men very truly. "Seldom," he says, "in the world's history has a tyrant found baser instruments for his basest designs than Henry found for carrying out the visitations of the English monasteries. That any monastery in England contained half-a-dozen such wretches as the more prominent of the visitors who came to despoil them is almost inconceivable. It is a sickening story. The reader is in danger of disbelieving everything that these men report in his indignation at the audacious and manifest lying which characterizes their reports."

12. Who were these two ? Layton, who, according to a passage in Cooper's *Athenae Cantabrigienses*, once told Cromwell that but for him he would have been a mere basket-bearer, was the son of William Layton, of Dalemain, in Cumberland. He was educated at Cambridge, where he took his B.C.L. degree in 1522, and where he was ordained. He held the sinecure living of Stepney, and another living at Brington. He was at one time a clerk in Chancery ; in 1535 he became clerk to the Privy Council ; in the previous year he had become Archdeacon of Buckingham. He was one of Anne Boleyn's judges, and he made a visitation of the University of Oxford, at Cromwell's request. Always he was completely under Cromwell's thumb, and his letters to his master are full of sickening adulation and fawning sentiment. " Surely," he writes to Cromwell on one occasion, " Simeon was never so glad to see Christ his master as I shall be to see your Lordship." But he had worse qualities than that of flattery. He was foul-mouthed, more so, indeed, than Bale himself, and in a more obscene and indecent way ; he bribed people and received bribes himself (openly, says Froude, in extenuation), and worse than that, he was without doubt a thief. As a reward for his labours as monastic visitor, Layton was preferred to the Deanery of York, and one of his first actions there was to steal plate and jewels belonging to the Minster, and pawn them for his own benefit. There is an entry in the York Registers which proves this, under date March 27, 1544.

" Several jewels and plate appertaining to the Church of York, pawned by Richard Layton, late dean, for a certain term of years, are now by consent of the prebends, ordered to be redeemed with money extracted out of the chest of dividend." Possibly this transaction ended Layton's connection with York; he is next heard of as an Ambassador at Brussels, where he died in 1545.

13. Legh, another Cambridge man, was of better antecedents than Layton, and according to his fellow-visitor, Ap-Rice, was a fop and a dandy, dressing himself in the height of fashion and going about with a retinue of twelve liveried servants. Ap-Rice complains of him that he is overbearing, insolent, and abusive, and has behaved with unnecessary rudeness to various abbots and priors. Ap-Rice, indeed, who had no very good character himself, appears to have been anxious to discredit Legh in the eyes of Cromwell, but his complaints only made Cromwell employ Legh all the more—he was evidently the exact type of familiar and agent that Cromwell wanted. One feature of his work which has come to light lies in his regular supply to Cromwell of scurrilous and obscene stories about nuns; he sent them to his master, he says in one such letter, to make him laugh. And in spite of Ap-Rice's complaints, Cromwell did nothing to stop what Froude admits was the " overwhelming insolence " of Legh; Legh to the end remained the trusty co-partner and helpmate of Layton. Like Layton he earned substantial rewards,

in addition to the bribes and levies which he forced from the helpless heads of religious houses: his great reward lay in the grant of Nostel Priory, but he also got the mastership of Sherburn Hospital, in Durham, and according to certain depositions made before a commission of enquiry in 1557, he there so misbehaved himself by peculation and dishonesty that he brought about "the utter disinheritance, decay, and destruction of the godly foundation of the house."

14. Such were the men to whom Cromwell, in pursuance of his power as Vicar-General, entrusted the visitation of the religious houses of the North. They had already been employed elsewhere on the same sort of business, and were, accordingly, adepts at bullying and cajoling—for they used both methods—the heads of the various institutions on which they descended. Layton made special application to Cromwell that he should be sent to the North, and he suggested that one Blitheman, who became a very prominent figure in the subsequent suppression of the religious houses, should be sent with him as registrar. Cromwell appears to have granted this request at once, and to have appointed Legh as joint-visitor with Layton; Layton and Legh, either accompanied by Blitheman, or shortly afterwards joined by him, arrived in York, as the centre of the Northern Province, early in January 1536. Now the Northern Province was then different in geographical area to what it is in these days. It consisted of the three dioceses of York, Durham, and Carlisle. York

comprised the whole of Yorkshire, a great part of Lancashire, the entire county of Nottinghamshire, a considerable portion of Westmorland, and a slice of land lying athwart the boundaries of Northumberland and Durham. Durham included all the rest of the county bearing its name, and all the rest of Northumberland. Carlisle comprised the whole of Cumberland and a part of Westmorland. The total area of the province, then, was of considerable extent, and the number of religious foundations was great. Most of them were, of course, in Yorkshire, where the Cistercians had houses at Rievaulx, Fountains, Kirkstall, Sawley, Byland, Roche, Jervaulx, and Meaux; the Benedictines at York, Selby, and Whitby; the Augustinians at Bolton, Bridlington, Guisborough, Nostel, and less important ones at eight other places; the Premonstratensians at Coverham, Easby, and Eggleston; the Gilbertines at four places in addition to the chief house at Malton; the Cluniacs at Monk Bretton and Pontefract, and the Carthusians at Hull and Mount Grace. There was also one other priory —Grosmont. According to the *Suppression Papers*, edited by the late Mr. Clay for the Yorkshire Archæological Society, there were 38 abbeys and priories in Yorkshire, with 7 cells, or smaller houses, and 23 nunneries: there were also a large number of friaries, Dominican, Franciscan, Carmelite. The list is not so extensive in the case of the other counties. But in Nottinghamshire there were Benedictines at Blyth and Cluniacs at Lenton; Cistercians at Rufford and

Carthusians at Beauvale; in that county, too, were numerous Augustinian houses, notably at Welbeck, Newstead, and Thurgarton. In Lancashire there were the great Cistercian abbeys of Whalley and Furness; the Augustinians had houses at Cockersand, Cartmel, and Conishead; the friars of various orders were established in the growing towns like Lancaster, Preston, and Warrington. In Westmorland, then almost a solitude, there were friaries at Appleby and at Shap. In Cumberland the Augustinians held Carlisle Cathedral; the Benedictines were at Wetheral and St. Bees; the Cistercians at Holme Cultram and Calder: there were nunneries at Arnthwaite and Seton. Northumberland boasted the ancient Benedictine foundations of Lindisfarne, Tynemouth, Jarrow, and Wearmouth; there was one great Cistercian house, Newminster; several Orders of friars were represented at Newcastle. Durham was a Cathedral priory of the Benedictines; there were several cells attached to it: in that county no other Order seems to have been represented. Altogether, taking the various monastic Orders, Benedictine, Cluniac, Cistercian, Augustinian, Premonstratensian, Carthusian, Gilbertine, the Orders of friars, Dominican, Francisan, Carmelite, Austin, the nunneries, hospitals, and preceptories, the number of religious houses in the Northern Province must have run well into the hundreds.

15. What was the condition of these houses in 1536?—the year in which these two men of highly

doubtful character descended upon them. We know that there are two widely different opinions current on this point. There is the opinion of those who see, and will see, nothing but the good qualities of monastic life in England; there is the opinion of those who see, and will see, nothing but evil in that life. Rather than enter into the merits of such a quarrel—for it is a quarrel, and not a controversy—I prefer to quote certain passages from Dr. Whitney's work, *The Reformation*. "The Monastic Orders," says the present Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge, speaking of them at the period we are discussing, "may have lost their former zeal, but they had not sunk to the low level of life that satirists and unfounded tradition ascribed to them. Although Warham's Visitation (1511) showed in many cases financial mismanagement, defects, and sometimes small dishonesties in housekeeping or care of property, there were few moral evils and certainly no widespread corruption. Some monasteries needed (as St. Albans had in 1499) reproof and received it; numbers were diminishing, and for many years new foundations and additional endowments of the old had nigh ceased; pious founders preferred to endow hospitals or chantries. Thus from Henry IV to Henry VIII only eight monasteries were founded, but about sixty colleges or hospitals. The variation in the endowments of chantries (where a single priest said masses for the founder) is instructive: for Yorkshire, A.D. 1350–1400, the number was 48;

1400–50 it was 28; 1450–1500 it was 61; from 1500 to 1550 it was 47; the drop in the fifteenth century, if due to Lollard influence, was only temporary, and eventually the old doctrines had lost no favour. If the feeling of piety then remained the same, the lessening zeal for monasteries is still more significant; clearly they no longer met a need of the age, and indeed the visitations and all our evidence show no very high standard of usefulness or devoutness of life. Broadly speaking, society felt the need of a life of retirement less than it had done in bygone ages; many men and women took up the life of rule without a distinct vocation for it; there were many houses that were places of pleasant retirement for the rich, and others that were places of easy life for the poor. While there were, as Erasmus said, types of the highest life to be found in the monasteries, they no longer preserved, as of old, a higher general standard of life than the outside world. They still served the old purpose of schools; they were still, though with less economic and agricultural success, landlords of fairly generous views; but their religious functions were not so well performed. . . . Much has been written lately," continues Dr. Whitney, in a further passage, " as to the Dissolution, and it must be said that the evidence upon which the monasteries were condemned invites, and the agents who destroyed them compel, suspicions of the good faith of the Government. Altogether some 350 smaller and 200 larger houses were dissolved,

some 5,000 and 3,000 persons respectively affected. There should have come to the King an income of some £200,000 a year, or a capital of some £4,800,000 in the currency of the day, and in modern value of ten times that amount at least. [I think Dr. Whitney is wrong here; the pound of 1536 had a purchasing power of probably fifteen times as much as the pound of, say, 1913.] But so much was wanted to enrich courtiers and officials, the new nobility subservient to the Crown, that the results, little of which went to good purposes, were far below this sum. . . . The injury done by the suppression to the higher interests of national life," he says further, " is hard to estimate. The monasteries had been the homes of much labour and skill that could not maintain themselves alone, and nowhere was the change more felt than at the Universities, where the number of students became sadly lessened. Education, society, agriculture, were dislocated, and the economic change (a third of the land in England may have changed ownership) led to uncertainty, and a race, often unscrupulous, for wealth and power. The poor lost friends always kind, if not always wise."

16. Now there is one remark in that passage from Dr. Whitney's book on which I wish to lay stress. The charges of gross and abominable immorality brought against the monasteries cannot, it is clear, in his opinion, be substantiated. But it was on these charges, made lavishly by Legh and Layton, in the North, by Ap-Rice, London, Bedyll, in the South,

that the monasteries were condemned. We are only concerned with the Northern Province here; let us see from the documents of the time what Legh and Layton did as soon as they arrived in the province. The papers, letters, documents relative to their operations have all been collected and annotated by the late Mr. J. W. Clay and form volume 48 of the Record Series of the Yorkshire Archæological Society: anyone who wishes to read them may do so by turning into a public library where that series is kept. As soon as Legh and Layton reached York they began the supply of libellous and slanderous reports which without doubt it had been agreed upon between Cromwell and themselves they should furnish. Occasionally their reports are so filthy, so obscene, so indecent, even in an age which was not at all particular, that the writers turned from the use of English to Latin. The first persons to be slandered were the Abbot of St. Mary's at York and his monks, who were accused—on supposition—of nameless crimes; the next the Abbot of Fountains, whom Layton and Legh in a joint letter accuse of notoriously keeping six mistresses, though they do not call them by so polite a name: they further accuse him of being a thief, and denounce him as a very fool and a miserable idiot. There is, of course, not the least evidence in support of these charges: we shall see presently, in the case of the Abbot of Fountains, William Thirsk, why they were made. But there never is any evidence in support of any of the charges.

The method appears to have been that Legh and Layton, writing to Cromwell, reported that such and such a thing existed, without adducing any evidence whatever of its existence. The sum total of their reports appears in the final sentence of the Act of Parliament resultant upon them—that manifest sin, vicious, carnal, and abominable living, is daily used and committed amongst the little and small abbeys, priories, and other religious houses of monks, canons, and nuns, and that this vicious living is shamelessly on the increase.

17. I suppose no one of recent times has known so much about the actual conditions of the sixteenth century as the late Dr. James Gairdner. He spent nearly the whole of his life in the service of the Public Record Office : he was acquainted with the documentary evidence of the Tudor period as few men have ever been. With Dr. Brewer and Mr. Brodie he edited the State Papers of Henry VIII : he wrote two great works dealing with that era which it is difficult to think will ever be surpassed for profundity of learning and accuracy of statement—*Lollardy and the Reformation*, and *The Church of England in the Sixteenth Century*. Moreover, in the controversy between England and Rome he was a fearless and doughty champion of the English side ; to him the Church of England was the ancient Catholic church of this country, reformed, but unbroken in continuity. Now Dr. Gairdner has dealt fearlessly with the general charge of Legh and Layton in Book III of *Lollardy*

and the Reformation. After characterizing that general charge as a beautifully vague expression, put forward "to justify an act of plunder," he deals with the reports, or *comperts*, as Legh and Layton styled them, more particularly. "If the reports were at all trustworthy," he proceeds, "many of the large houses as well as the small were dens of infamous vice. The reports, however, will hardly command much credit from the student of contemporary State papers. That abuses may have existed in some monasteries, and that impurities from laxity of rule may not have been effectually dealt with, are facts that we might presume from the infirmity of human nature; but before we can believe that the abominations were anything like so gross as were reported, we ought to have better evidence of the honesty and truthfulness of the visitors than appears, even in the light of their own reports. Some of these filthy revelations, indeed, are of a nature that could only have been known, if true, through the confessional, and that any of the monks or nuns chose Legh or Layton for a confessor is past belief." Dr. Gairdner then instances the method of procedure used by Layton at the Abbey of Leicester. Layton, describing that method, writes that he found the Abbot an honest man, but his monks most obstinate and fractious. He therefore proposes to call some of them before him, accuse them of unnatural crimes, and on their denying the accusations, descend gradually to less heinous offences. "Now," continues Dr. Gairdner, "if this was the

process used in other cases, what likelihood is there that a true result was elicited? The worst was surmised at the beginning; each monk was supposed to be guilty before he was found innocent, and how far his indignant disclaimers were regarded we do not know. Very many remained silent before a judge whom they did not acknowledge, and silence may have been taken as tantamount to a confession of guilt. It is to be presumed, moreover, that in their rapid survey of the houses—far too hurried to have been anything like a judicial enquiry—the visitors occasionally accepted mere gossip and scandal as if they had been well-ascertained facts." Then, a little further on, after remarking that the tradition against Monasticism which has existed in this country from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century arose from old nourished prejudices against men defenceless after they were dead, he sums up the whole case in a sentence: "The defaming of the monasteries was simply a step towards their suppression and the confiscation of their endowments; and apart from the gratification of avarice, their suppression was a necessary step in the policy which the King and Cromwell had been carefully engineering."

II

THE SUPPRESSIONS OF 1536–1540

1. I HAVE already referred to the accusations brought by Legh and Layton, immediately on their arrival in Yorkshire, against the Abbot of Fountains, William Thirsk, whom they not only charged with immorality, but denounced as a thief. There was a reason for this, with which we will now deal. There was at that time a monk of Fountains named Marmaduke Bradley, an elderly man, who had not only held high office at Fountains for many years, but was also a prebendary of the neighbouring collegiate church of Ripon. There is no doubt, from the documentary evidence, that Legh and Layton had had secret dealings with this man before their arrival in Yorkshire, with a view to the deposition of William Thirsk as Abbot, and the putting of Marmaduke Bradley in his place. On their arrival, they began the active prosecution of this backstairs business by charging Thirsk with immorality and theft, and frightening him into resigning his office privily into their hands—that transaction to be kept secret for the time being. On January 20, 1536, they wrote to Cromwell, making the charges against Thirsk, but, of course, giving no satisfactory evidence in support of them, and informing him of what they had done about Thirsk's resignation.

They then showed their hand, plainly. "There is," the letter continues, "a monk of the house called Marmaduke, to whom Mr. Timmes left a prebend in Ripon church, now abiding upon the same prebend, the wisest monk within England of that order and well learned, twenty years officer and ruler of all that house, a wealthy fellow, which will give you six hundred marks to make him abbot there, and pay you immediately after the election, without delay or respite, at one payment. The first fruits to the King is a thousand pounds which he with his policy will pay within three years, and owe no man therefore one groat." Here we have the whole job laid bare: Cromwell is to have six hundred marks; the King a thousand pounds; what Legh and Layton are to have is, of course, not stated. Needless to say, the transaction is quickly carried through; William Thirsk is bundled out, Marmaduke Bradley is put in his place; the King and the Vicar-General get their money: Legh and Layton, we may be sure, get theirs. And very soon Abbot Marmaduke writes to Cromwell thanking him for his promotion and assuring him that his continual prayers are always at his service. This letter was written early in March; before the end of the month we find Bradley, safely settled in his abbacy of Fountains, steadfastly refusing to give up his prebend of Ripon, which Cromwell had asked him to resign. He was apparently a man who believed in pluralism, for he not only enjoyed his preferments at Ripon and Fountains but was also a Chaplain to the King, master

of the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene at Ripon, and a suffragan bishop—with what title is not clear, though Browne Willis speaks of him as having been Suffragan Bishop of Hull. He was the last Abbot of Fountains, and when he willingly surrendered the house to the Royal Commissioners three years after his bargain with Legh and Layton, he took care to make exceedingly good arrangements for himself in respect to his pension.

2. It will be remembered that Dr. Gairdner in a passage just quoted spoke of the hurried nature of the enquiry of Legh and Layton. The phrase is a mild one: if Legh and Layton actually visited the places in Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland and Cumberland which they said they did, they must have travelled at a rate of speed truly extraordinary. They arrived in York early in January 1536; they were at York on the 13th of that month, as is evidenced by a letter to Cromwell. On February 28th their secretary, Blitheman, despatched to Cromwell two documents, one purporting to be an Itinerary of the places visited by his masters; the other a compendium of the various houses in relation to superstitions, rents, debts, and founders: Mr. Clay remarks of this second list that it is not fit entirely for publication; it is, indeed, the document on which Dr. Gairdner says no reliance can be placed. There is little more reliance, if any, to be placed on the Itinerary. When we bear in mind that in the sixteenth century there was scarcely a road in the North of England worthy the

name, and that there were no other means of travelling than going a-foot or riding horseback, we can scarcely believe that Legh and Layton could have made their alleged inspection within a term which, at the very most, could not have been more than four, and was probably only three weeks. It is characteristic of their methods that in the Itinerary, as printed by Mr. Clay in the Suppression Papers, no dates are given. The whole account is hurried, fragmentary, incomplete. Legh and Layton, accompanied by Blitheman, set off from York, presumably about January 15th, and went North. The entries in the Itinerary give the name of the religious house visited, the name if the original founder and of the present, and the distance from it to the last place visited. Thus :

Item. to Yedingham, nuns of St. Benedict order, of the foundation of the Lord Latymer three mile from the aforesaid place.

Item. to Keldholme, nuns of the Cistercian order, of the foundation of the Lord Westmoreland ten mile from the said place.

Very soon the route appears to be without order or reason ; but the visitors seem to have gone round a part of the North Riding into the East ; thence into the West, and then, by way of Sawley, into Lancashire, where their researches and inspections were equally hurried. Thence they descended upon another part of North Yorkshire, Richmondshire, after rapidly glancing at which they remembered certain places further south which needed inspection. These Blitheman duly incorporates in his Itinerary, and to wind up adds a comprehensive sentence which begins

with what one can scarcely regard as otherwise than a barefaced lie : " All these we have been in, beside divers other more, both in Durham bishopric (that is to imply, all over Durham and Northumberland) and also Carlisle (that is, all over Cumberland and Westmorland) with many good towns and villages as well in my Lord Grace's liberties as in others. Jesu preserve your masterships ! "

3. There is yet one other feature of the infamous reports of Legh and Layton to which it is necessary to draw attention. This compendium contains particulars of various alleged superstitious objects which they declare they found at various religious houses. Some of these were of the sort familiar enough in the Middle Ages, such as fragments of the Holy Cross and relics of saints. But certain of them existed only in the foul imaginations of Legh and Layton, and it is significant that in all these cases the charges made verge on matters not usually talked about in polite society. Behind them all there is a subtle suggestion that the religious houses, and especially those of women, were ineradicably mixed up with immorality, not only amongst their own members, but amongst the surrounding populations. To take one particular only—it is impossible to conclude otherwise than that Legh and Layton, in their report, designed to suggest that the religious houses offered certain superstitious remedies to those lay-folk who dreaded the consequences of irregularity in moral conduct. This suggestion is subtly conveyed all through.

4. The result of the visitors' reports to Cromwell was, as we have already noted, the presentation of a bill in Parliament for the suppression of all religious houses having a less income than £200 a year. But this bill (afterwards known as the First Act of Suppression, 27 Henry VIII, Cap. 28) made its appearance in Parliament before Blitheman's report from the North, dated February 28th. It was laid before the House of Commons on February 4th; probably therefore it was founded on reports from the South, by London, Ap-Rice, and Bedyll, and on a possible interim report from Legh and Layton, whose letters, to be sure, were sufficient indication of the way in which they were carrying out Cromwell's instructions to make the case as black as possible against the monastic orders. The bill, or, as it soon was, the Act, analysed, amounted to this: It set forth the evil state of the religious communities. It declared that previous visitation had been powerless to effect any reform, and that it was being passed to suppress vice, and to send the wicked out of the smaller monasteries into the greater. The possessions of the smaller monasteries were to be diverted to better uses. All monasteries worth less than an annual value of £200 were to be given to the King. Grantees of suppressed lands were to have the same rights as the late owners. All the ornaments, jewels, goods, chattels, and debts of the suppressed houses were to be given to the King—"his Highness will have most tender respect," says the Act, "to such of the said chief governors as well

and truly conserve and keep the goods and ornaments of their houses to the use of his Majesty." There was much else, and certain provisions (such as that the grantees of monastic land should keep up the hospitality which the monks had shown) which were never enforced, nor meant to be enforced; the whole thing, put into plain language, meant that all the smaller religious houses were to be forthwith suppressed and disendowed, and that every penny resulting from the confiscation was to be handed over to Henry VIII.

5. Now when, a little later, the Northern insurgents presented the King with a list of their grievances, one of their chief causes of complaint was this very Act for the suppression of the lesser monasteries, and Henry condescended to put forth a reply, carefully composed by himself, in which there is a remarkably specious passage. "Ye allege that the service of God is much diminished," says the King. "The truth thereof is contrary, for there be no houses suppressed where God was well served, but (only) where most vice, mischief, and abomination of living was used . . . What unkindness and unnaturality may we impute to you and all our subjects that be of this mind, that had liever such an unthrifty sort of visious persons should enjoy such possessions, profits, and emoluments as grow of the said houses, to the maintenance of their unthrifty life, than we, your natural Prince, sovereign lord and King, which doth and hath spent more in your defence of our own than six times they

be worth." "The truthfulness of all this," says Dr. Gairdner, commenting on the royal reply, "seems to be on a par with its urbanity. Not a single house suppressed where abominable vice was not practised! Even supposing that, against all reasonable probability, vice reigned universally in houses which did not possess £200 a year of revenue, the King's visitors had not, with all their diligence, traversed more than the half of England, and that half very hastily; so there was no means of judging the characters of half the houses suppressed. In fact, the total number of houses actually visited was not nearly one-third of all the monasteries of England; so that there could have been no report at all against two-thirds of the houses suppressed. Yet the King boldly alleges that not a single house was suppressed which was not vicious, and declares that their suppression weighs less on his mind than the fact that he had spared a few in hope of their amendment; which he did, indeed, for pecuniary considerations, though he did not say so, neighbours offering occasionally convenable sums that useful monasteries might stand. And," continues Dr. Gairdner, "what a fine touch in the end about the King having spent of his own money more than six times the value of those smaller monasteries in defence of the realm, when he had laid on oppressive taxes, followed by a forced loan of which he got Parliament to relieve him from repayment? The truth is that there never was a time in his whole reign when Henry was in more serious danger from rebellion, and

he was not at all scrupulous about the means he used to tide over a temporary difficulty."

6. But the Act was passed: in March 1536. According to Sir Henry Spelman, the House of Commons was by no means willing to add it to the Statute Book. "I have heard," he says (*History of Sacrilege*) that when the bill had stuck long in the Lower House and could get no passage (the King) commanded the Commons to attend him in the forenoon in his gallery, where he let them wait till late in the afternoon, and then, coming out of his chamber, walking a turn or two amongst them, first on the one side, and then on the other, at last, 'I hear,' saith he, 'that my bill will not pass, but I will have it pass, or I will have some of your heads,' and so without other rhetoric or persuasion returned to his chamber." Spelman may have had this from tradition, but who can deny that it is all of a piece with Henry's usual arbitrary and tyrannical character? The thing had to be done, and when it was done the suppression of the lesser houses went on apace. There is a considerable list of those suppressed in the Northern Province in that spring and summer of 1536 in the Cottonian MS., in the British Museum, with particulars of their annual value. The majority were of little worth. Holy Trinity at York is set down at £196 9s. 10d.; the cell of St. Bees in Cumberland at £143 16s. 2½d.; Marton Priory was worth £151 5s. 4d.; Caverham Abbey, £160 18s. 3d.; the Carthusian house at Hull, £174. These, with Warter, £143 7s. 8d.; Malton,

£197 10s. 3d.; and Sawley, £147 3s. 10d., were the principal houses in point of value. But there were many which must have been miserably poor. Nunburnholme was worth £8; Ellerton-on-Swale, £15; Arthington, £11; Esholt, £13; Grosmont, £12; the cell of Hirst, in the Isle of Axholme, £5 10s. 1d. And many of these smaller houses were in debt.

7. Legislation in furtherance of the King's scheme for possessing himself of the monastic revenues did not stop with the passing of the first Act of Suppression. That was quickly followed by an Act for establishing a Court of Augmentations, which in plain English was simply a legally constituted organization for laying hands upon everything that the smaller religious houses possessed. Under this Act local commissioners were appointed who were commanded to seize all goods, cattle, plate, jewels, implements, and belongings being within or appertaining to the condemned houses, and to bring and convey to the Tower of London such valuables as money, plate, ornaments, and jewels that should in any way come to their hands. In Yorkshire, by an order dated April 24, 1536, the Commissioners appointed were Sir Ralph Ellerker, Sir Marmaduke Constable, Sir George Lawson, Sir Roger Cholmondeley, William Bapthorpe, Robert Challoner, Hugh Fuller, and Leonard Beckwith. Every one of these men was a lesser Cromwell in respect of rapacity; each took good care to profit himself in his capacity of Commissioner. Beckwith was a peculiarly rapacious man; he was more busily

employed than any of the rest, and at an early period was appointed chief receiver of friaries ; vast sums of money came to his hands and a great deal of it never passed through. He was of no particular rank or fortune when the suppression began, but within a few years he had become a very wealthy man, owning large estates—the lands of Selby Abbey in particular amongst them—and figuring in great fashion in the highest official circles. Whoever closely studies the financial aspect of the Suppression in the North will soon see that Beckwith carved himself a large slice out of the pie ; he will see, too, that every one of Beckwith's fellow-commissioners had a finger or two in it.

8. Greed, indeed, became manifest, and walked unashamedly abroad as soon as it was known what was afoot. There is nothing more disgusting or sickening in the whole course of English history than the records of the indecent haste with which certain prominent men of the North endeavoured to share in the spoliation of the religious houses. The letters which these men wrote to Cromwell are contemptible in their sneaking insidiousness, and in their sycophancy. Sir George Darcy wants Swine Abbey ; he beseeches Cromwell's loving favour to get it for him. Sir Henry Everingham wants whatever he can get, and desires Cromwell's gentle kindness ; Sir John Nevile beseeches Jesu long to continue Cromwell in good and prosperous health and may his son-in-law have the priory of Hampole ? Even Lee, the Archbishop of York, wants something,

and, being an Archbishop, not a little ; he asks for Nostel in Yorkshire and Hexham in Northumberland. Sir William Gascoigne begs for Nun Monkton ; the Earl of Westmorland beseeches Cromwell to have him in mind for Blanchland and Keldholme ; Sir William Musgrove wants Esholt, and appeals to Cromwell's noble heart for it : Elizabeth Ughtred asks to have " one of these abbeys, if they fortune to go down," and prays that Almighty Jesu may ever preserve her especial good lord the Vicar-General —who, if one-thousandth part of the fulsome compliments paid him in these applications were merited by him, would have been something very different to the Cromwell of sound history.

9. But while these gentry gathered round the victim, to get what slices they could of the flesh, and, if that was all gone, to scrape the bones, what was the general feeling amongst the Northern peoples when the suppression became active ?—What was their answer to the charges made against monks and nuns, who, of course, were their brothers or sisters or cousins or near relations (for there was scarce a family in the North that had not kinsfolk in cloister or convent), and whom they knew far better than Legh and Layton ever could ? That answer came in the rebellion of 1536 which we call the Pilgrimage of Grace. There is no need to go into details about that remarkable and ill-fated rising, which, if its leaders had possessed the courage and determination shown by Oliver Cromwell and his followers a hundred years later,

would undoubtedly have resulted in the deposition of Henry VIII. Its history has been told, in recent years, at full length, by two unusually painstaking and well-equipped students, experts in knowledge of the Tudor period, and the result of their labours yields but one more painful proof of the tyranny of Henry, and the unscrupulous methods adopted by him to gain his own ends. It had been the fashion of previous writers of history to treat the Pilgrimage of Grace as but one of the fairly numerous examples of rebellion against the Crown, found from time to time in English annals, and its leaders and promoters as ordinary revolutionaries. But in truth, the Northern rising of 1536 was vastly different to any other English rebellion in that it was mainly religious, and that those at the head of it were actuated by high ideals. True, it was not wholly religious ; there were social, political, and economic discontents allied with the religious. But that religion lay at the back of it, and was the principal reason of it, may be seen in considering certain of the demands made by the leaders in the council held at Pontefract, whereat the complaints of the Northern folk were drawn up in a formal petition to the King. The insurgents asked, in particular, that the heresies of Luther, Wycliffe, Huss, and of other like persons should be annulled and destroyed within the realm ; that the supremacy of the Church in things spiritual should be restored to the See of Rome, but that no first-fruits or pension should be paid to Rome out of the realm ; that the religious

houses suppressed or in course of suppression should be restored and have their properties again ; that tenths and first-fruits should be clearly discharged ; that the friars should be restored to their houses ; that heretics, spiritual and temporal, should be punished ; that the rights and privileges of the Church should be confirmed, and the liberties of the Church have their old customs at Durham, Ripon, Beverley, and York ; that benefit of clergy should remain, and that right of sanctuary should be restored in cases of extreme necessity. These demands were all of a religious or semi-religious nature. There were two others, eminently significant ones, arising out of the recent high-handed proceedings and marking the indignation of the Northern peoples. One was that the Lord Cromwell, the Lord Chancellor, Audley, and Sir Richard Riche should be dismissed of the King's Council and degraded as subverters of the good laws of the realm, and the other that Dr. Legh and Dr. Layton should have condign punishment for their extortions and abominations.

10. Nothing in the whole history of this blood-stained reign is more illuminative of the treachery of Henry VIII than the story of his dealings with Robert Aske, leader of the vast army of Northern men, noblemen, gentlemen, yeomen, labourers, representing every class of society, which sought redress at the King's hands. Henry's personal relations with Aske are of a piece with all that history has taught us of the falsity and cruelty of the Tudors, from Henry VII to Eliza-

beth. It will be remembered that although Aske was in command of an army of, probably, thirty thousand well-armed men, and opposed to a formidable force of Royal troops, no blood was shed in this affair: instead of bloodshedding there was endless negotiation. In December the King sent a safe-conduct to Aske, accompanied by a gracious message; he desired Aske to come to Court, where, he said, he hoped that Aske, by frank dealing with him, would gain his favour. Aske repaired to London in the last week of the year. He was received by Henry in a fulsomely flattering manner. In the *Spanish Chronicle*, edited by the late Martin Hume, there is an account of his reception, which, if not strictly accurate as to detail, is reliable in its main features. Henry, as soon as he saw Aske, rose up, threw his arms about him, welcomed him warmly, and in the presence of the Council told him that he had only to ask what he desired, and it should be granted. Aske spoke out, after the fashion of Yorkshiremen, with boldness and candour. "Sir," said he, "Your Majesty allows yourself to be governed by a tyrant named Cromwell. Everyone knows that if it had not been for him the seven thousand poor clergy I have in my company would not be ruined wanderers." Henry promised redress, and made Aske rich presents, a gold chain, a thousand pounds in money, a crimson satin jacket, and told him he would make him, there and then, one of his Council. Aske was an honest and a simple-minded man; he was captivated by Henry's well-assumed graciousness,

and he certainly believed in Henry's promises. Henry in short, after his characteristic Tudor fashion, had won Aske's confidence, and Aske went home, assured that the King would be true to his word and redeem the wrongs of the North, and little thinking that already the false tyrant he had just quitted was quietly planning his destruction.

11. What followed makes one of the blackest passages in the history of the Reformation in Northern England. Aske persuaded his followers that the King would do them justice. They dispersed, swearing allegiance to Henry. But no justice came. And there were turbulent spirits whom Aske could not control; of whose doings, indeed, he was wholly ignorant. There were disturbances on the Yorkshire and Lancashire border, and in the East Riding; there was another in Cumberland. These gave the King the excuse he wanted, and all the leaders of the bloodless Pilgrimage of Grace were arrested and brought to trial. The proceedings were mere travesties of justice; the results foregone conclusions. Then Henry swept to his vengeance. Lord Darcy was beheaded on Tower Hill; Lord Hussey was executed at Lincoln. Sir John Bulmer, Sir Stephen Hamerton, the Prior of Guisborough, and the former Abbot of Fountains were put to death at Tyburn; Bulmer and Hamerton, as knights, were only hanged and beheaded; the others were hanged, drawn, and quartered, with the usual horrible detail. On the day that witnessed her husband's execution, Lady Bulmer was drawn on a

hurdle to Smithfield and burnt alive ; a contemporary chronicler says that she was a very fair and beautiful creature. Then Sir Thomas Percy, Sir Francis Bigod, the Prior of Bridlington, and the Abbot of Jervaulx suffered at Tyburn, and the Abbot of Salley was hanged, drawn, and quartered at Carlisle. Seventy common folk who had taken part in the Lincolnshire rising were similarly done to death at various centres in that county. Sir Robert Constable was hanged outside the Beverley Gate at Hull. Finally, on July 12, 1537, it being market-day in York, Robert Aske was hanged on the top of Clifford's Tower. Two hundred and sixteen persons in all were sacrificed to the King's greed for blood, and there must have been many amongst them—for the people of that day were far more conversant with Holy Scripture than we are now—who in their last hours thought of a certain sacred passage which adjures men to put not their trust in princes.

12. Meanwhile the work of destruction resultant on the First Act of Suppression was still going on throughout the North. We get interesting and significant sidelights on it in the correspondence of the period. There are letters from the King himself which are characteristic of Henry's tyranny and lust of blood. On October 19, 1536, he writes to Lord Derby in reference to the disturbance at Salley, where the suppression had been greatly resented not only by the monks but by the people of the neighbourhood ; his orders are stern and explicit : " We will that you

shall take the said Abbot and monks with their assistants forth with violence, and without any manner of delay, in their monk's apparel cause them to be hanged up." In the following February he writes to the Duke of Norfolk, concerning any monks or canons still remaining in the houses of Salley, Hexham, Newminster, Lanercost, and Easby ; without pity or circumstance, he says, all such are to be hanged, or, as he elegantly phrases it, tied up, on the instant, and with no ceremony. There are letters from the King's agents and commissioners telling how they carried out the royal behests—Norfolk tells how he had two canons of Warter Priory ready to be hanged in chains at York, and the Prior of Watton in durance till he can be similarly executed before his own house. The letters of various land-grabbers pour in upon Cromwell. Sir William Parr, beseeching the Lord to preserve the Vicar General in much honour, wants the preferment of Jervaulx Abbey : Matthew Boynton desires the stewardship of the lands of Bridlington : William Gascoigne puts in a claim for both these places. There is an interesting correspondence between the King, Norfolk, and Cromwell about the valuables of Bridlington Priory. Norfolk—whom the authors of *The Pilgrimage of Grace* call a greater scoundrel than Cromwell, as regards moral character—was charged with the spoliation of Bridlington, and he seems to have done his work very thoroughly. On June 5, 1537, he writes two letters, one to Cromwell, the other to the King. He tells Cromwell that he is sending

up by the hands of one Tristam Tesshe the gold torn from the shrine of St. John ; in the other letter he describes to Henry the gold and silver things which he is sending, and refers particularly to three proper wrought tablets, which, he says, if he had dared to be a thief, he would have stolen, to give to Anne Boleyn. " But," he adds, " now your highness having them may give them unto her if it be your pleasure." Gold, silver, wealth in various forms, poured in upon Henry at this time from the sale of lands, lead, building material, church ornaments, various church possessions, but that Henry, like his daughter Elizabeth while greedy and avaricious, was a poor and tardy payer of just debts, is proved by a letter from Sir Ralph Eure, the younger, to Cromwell, in which he piteously reminds Cromwell that the King owes him the amount of a bill, and that he has been making long and continual suit for it without result, and is now in great necessity wanting his money. Whether this applicant got his money does not appear ; Cromwell was just then flooded with more applications from the land-grabbers, who may be divided into two classes—those who wanted something for nothing, and those who wanted a great deal for a very little. Early in 1538, these people were unusually busy. Amongst them was Cranmer, who in a sickeningly fulsome letter to Cromwell asked, not for himself, 'tis true, but for his servant, John Wakefield, Controller of his household, the lands and demesnes of the Priory of St. John of

Pontefract. The Earl of Westmorland once more pesters Cromwell about Keldholme and would like Rosedale Abbey, too; Sir John Neville wants at least something out of Monk Bretton and Nostel; Nostel is also hankered after by Robert Ferrar, its quondam prior. And Sir Richard Gresham, merchant of London, like the cute business man he is, begins to buy up, at cheap rates, all the monastic land he can get hold of, and as early as October 1538, busies himself in chaffering with Cromwell for Fountains Abbey, which he eventually succeeds in getting, at a price far below its value.

13. One of the first results of the rising of 1536 was a further suppression of the religious houses. Many were suppressed by attainder, on account of the share taken, or alleged to have been taken, by their abbots, or priors, and inmates in the Pilgrimage of Grace: amongst these were Bridlington, Jervaulx, and Salley in Yorkshire; Barlings in Lincolnshire; and Kersall and Whalley in Lancashire. This was followed by surrender by consent; a vast number of houses were given up in this way, their holders making a virtue of necessity. There was no Act of Parliament to compel such surrenders, and the King therefore appointed commissioners for the various districts whose job was to negotiate with monks, nuns and friars, and to persuade them to give up their houses and possessions in return for pensions for life. In December 1538, we find certain commissioners of the North, Lawson, Bellasis, Blitheman, and Rokeby writing to Cromwell

with particulars of the work they have so far accomplished under this scheme of suppression by consent. They have quietly taken the surrenders and dissolved the monasteries of Worksop, Monk Bretton, St. Andrew's at York, Byland, Rievaulx, Kirkham, and Ellerton; they have also dissolved the house of Austin Friars at Tickhill; the three houses of Friars at Doncaster; the house of the Black Friars (Dominicans) at Pontefract; and those of the Franciscans, Dominicans, Austins, and Carmelites at York. The work is going on pleasantly, but they do not know what to do with the bells and lead at Bolton Priory—no commission for that has come to their hands, as Jesu knoweth. The use of the Holy Name and of other pious aspirations and exclamations is very frequent in this correspondence. Sir George Lawson and William Blitheman invoke the Holy Ghost in assuring Cromwell that they could get the surrender of Pontefract, Newburgh, and Malton, if only they were in possession of a commission for that work. Sir Nicholas Fairfax calls the Holy Ghost to witness that he will give Cromwell forty pounds wherewith to buy a gelding for himself, if only Cromwell will be good lord to him, and get him the preferment of Newburgh or of Whitby. And Ferrar, afterwards a bishop and a martyr, and who ought to have known better, in begging favours of Cromwell, invokes the grace of Christ Jesu to keep that oily rascal in health and honour for ever. Indeed, if he believed that the invocations to one Person or other of the Holy Trinity, with which the letters of

these people to himself generally concluded, were in any way likely to be heard with favour, Cromwell, when he eventually laid his head on the block on Tower Hill, one more victim of the tyrant he had served so well, must have been comfortably assured of a safe passage to Paradise. But Cromwell, as a master of pious cant himself, probably knew pious cant when he saw it in others, and however much Ferrar, in a letter of November 1539, prayed God for the love of Christ Jesu to save and maintain Cromwell in health and honour to God's glory, Cromwell no doubt knew that what Ferrar wanted was an establishing of his own honour and his own health in things material, such as the conferring of a nice piece of preferment on himself and other pieces on his friends. And there was a great deal to give away, and a great deal to be got cheap. Successive letters from the Commissioners of the North (amongst whom Legh and Layton now figured, they having come back in that capacity in consequence of a suggestion from Layton to Cromwell that he and Legh knew more about the monastic wealth than anybody) announce the progress of the surrenders; by the beginning of December 1539, they are able to report the fall of Fountains, Nostel, Pontefract, St. Mary's, York, and Selby, in addition to the surrender of many smaller houses. It had been announced, when this phase of the suppression was entered upon, that the religious houses should only be dissolved by the free will and with the full consent of their inmates, but there is ample documentary evidence to show that

the inmates had no option; they were compelled to surrender. It may be of value here to recall certain statistics as regards the suppression for the whole of England, given by Dr. Gairdner in his history of *The English Church in the Sixteenth Century*. Between 1524 and 1528, Wolsey suppressed 29 houses in order to obtain funds for his colleges at Oxford and Ipswich. 7 houses of Observant Friars were suppressed in 1534. 9 houses of the Carthusians were suppressed between 1532 and 1539. 215 houses were suppressed under the Act of 1536, though some of them were allowed to continue a while on sufferance. 103 nunneries were suppressed under the same Act. Between 1537 and 1539, 12 monasteries were suppressed by attainder. Between 1537 and 1540, 158 monasteries were surrendered; the same period witnessed the suppression of 30 more nunneries. In 1540, 43 preceptories of the Knights of St. John were confiscated. This list does not take into account the houses of friars of the various orders, nor of course the religious foundations of hospitals and chantries.

14. Henry had no legal right to possess himself of the lands and properties of the houses surrendered by consent, or, as it really should be put, by compulsion, and he was therefore advised to procure further powers from Parliament. Accordingly, the close of the Parliamentary session of 1539 witnessed the passage of the Act for the Dissolution of the Greater Monasteries (31 Henry VIII, cap. 13). This begins by stating that since February 4th of that year the heads of divers

religious houses have voluntarily surrendered their respective establishments and possessions into the King's hands, of their own free and voluntary minds, good wills and assents, without constraint, coaction, or compulsion of any manner of person or persons—which was manifestly untrue. It goes on to say that the King, his heirs, and successors for ever shall have, hold, possess and enjoy everything so surrendered since the date mentioned, and everything of the same nature to be dissolved hereafter. All leases and grants made by any abbot or head within one year next before the dissolution are to be void. The same provision is to apply to all feoffments, fines, and recoveries made in the like period. Similar enactments are made as to the religious houses yet to be dissolved. After numerous provisions as to titles, saving rights, and the like, another clause enacts that the King and his grantees of monastic property shall enjoy the same free of all tithe. The Act is of some considerable length—summarized, it means that from the date of its passing, all monastic property passed into the hands of the King. The first stage of the carefully-worked scheme of Henry and Cromwell for the spoliation of the Church was accomplished.

15. Still there were things to be done in that year 1539. The abbots of three great houses, Whiting of Glastonbury, Cook of Reading, and Beche of Colchester, were bold enough to refuse the surrender of their trusts. Little difficulty was made about getting rid of all three. Cromwell speedily preferred some

trumped up charges against each, and memoranda in his own handwriting, still in existence, prove that the proceedings against the three men were all carefully arranged, even as to the mode of execution, before ever they were brought to trial. They were soon hurried out of the world. The Abbot of Glastonbury was hanged, drawn, and quartered on Tor Hill, close by his own gates, his head was set on the principal gate, his limbs were distributed for exhibition at Bath, Ilchester, and Bridgwater. On the same day a similar fate befell the Abbot of Reading, and on December 1st the Abbot of Colchester suffered on Tower Hill in London. Little wonder that after this there was, as Gairdner well remarks, little of the spirit of resistance left. By the following spring all the remaining houses had fallen into the King's hands ; the Abbey of Waltham in the South, and the Priory of Pontefract in the North, were the last two religious houses in England to surrender.

16. According to the most dependable statistics, the number of inmates of the religious houses at the time of the suppression was about eight thousand. There had been lavish promise on the part of the King and his agents that they should be provided for by pension : how far the promise so made was kept is a very questionable matter. Statistics seem to indicate that not one-half of the dispossessed received any pension at all, or had any provision made for them. No pension could be paid to any man or woman unless he or she held the King's patent, and

the books of the Augmentation Office show that not four thousand patents were issued. Many of the Northern religious were expressly debarred from participation in any royal grant. Taking the friars as a body, they were driven out on the world penniless. Certain men in high places did well, because they had hastened to accommodate themselves to the royal wishes. The infamous Marmaduke Bradley, last Abbot of Fountains, who bought his abbacy by bribing Cromwell, Legh, Layton, and the King himself, and who was quick to surrender Fountains when asked to do so, got a pension equal to £1,200 a year in our money, for life : the Abbot of Ramsey got one of nearly £300 for the same reason. The Franciscan friars at Doncaster, on the other hand, were given £3 when they were turned into the streets ; the Trinitarians at Newcastle were dismissed with nothing at all. Of the small pittances given as annual pensions to ordinary monks and nuns, many of whom were old and feeble, a great deal was never paid ; there are pitiful letters still extant, in which the sufferings of these people are described. It has been charged against the nuns that many of them married on being thrown out of the cloister, but close investigation has proved that only two such marriages are known, and they were of novices who had never been professed, and were therefore free to marry.

17. What was the impression made upon the people who witnessed the scenes of the suppression ? Fortunately, in Sir Henry Ellis's *Original Letters Illus-*

trative of English History, we have an eye-witness's account; Aveling, the historian of Roche, believes it to have been written by one Cuthbert Shirebrook, afterwards a clergyman in that part of Yorkshire. "As soon as the visitors were entered within the gates," he says, "they called the abbot and other officers of the house, and caused them to deliver all the keys, and took an inventory of all their goods, both within doors and without. Such beasts, horses, sheep, and cattle as were abroad in pasture or grange places, the visitors caused to be brought into their presence. And when they had done so, they turned the abbot and all his convent and household forth out of the doors. This thing was not a little grief to the convent and all the servants of the house, departing one from another, and especially such as with their conscience could not break their profession. It would have made a heart of flint melt and weep to have seen the breaking-up of the house, the sorrowful departing and the sudden spoil that fell the same day of their departure from their house." Then this writer goes on to pay a tribute—let us remember, a contemporary tribute—to the religious as landlords. "They never raised any rent, or took any incomes or garsomes of their tenants; never took in or improved any commons. All sorts of people were helped and succoured by abbeys—yea, happy was that person that was tenant to an abbey, for it was a rare thing to hear that any tenant was removed by any taking his farm over his head." And he concludes by a testimony which is

well worth setting against the slanders of Legh and Layton—" They fulfilled all the works of charity in all the country round about them to the good example of all lay persons."

18. There will always be contention over these doings; despite the laying bare of contemporary documents, there will still be people who will see angels of light in Cromwell, and in Legh and Layton, and will hold that the monasteries were dens of abomination and sinks of iniquity. There will be other people who will continue to idealize the old religious houses, and refuse to credit their inmates with anything but sanctity and perfection of living. Let us consider two other views. The first is that of a historian whose name is still highly honoured in the North, the late Canon Dixon. " The process of abolition," he says, " was abominable; the defamation, the injustice, the cruelty, the false pretences, the cant, the amazing greed, the flaunting impudence, the awful waste. If one-half of the monasteries, if one-quarter, the sixth, the tenth part of them had been converted to colleges, schools, or hospitals, how much higher would the nation be now! If buildings had been spared because of their grandeur and beauty: if, where there was so much formality observed, the libraries had been removed to convenient central places, and there bestowed, with the same assiduous care with which the gold and silver were carted to London; then art and literature would have had less cause to curse the names which bigotry has blessed. If a few of the

monasteries had been kept as they were, and filled with those of the religious who desired of their own free will to keep that life, the revolution would have had a more honest appearance." And the other is, perhaps not so much a view as a presentation of what the monks, so vilified, so inhumanly treated, really stood for, of what their Ideal was, and it comes from the hand of a man who was no lover of monasticism, nor of institutional religion, but who had stern instincts of truth and justice, Thomas Carlyle, in one of the finest passages he ever penned : " Imperfect as we may be, we are here, with our litanies, shaven crowns, vows of poverty, to testify incessantly and indisputably to every heart, that this *earthly life* and its riches and possessions, and good and evil hap, are not intrinsically a reality at all, but are a shadow of realities, eternal, infinite ; that this Time-World, as an air-image, fearfully emblematic, plays and flickers in the grand, still mirror of Eternity ; and man's little Life has Duties that are great, that are alone great, and go up to Heaven, and down to Hell. This, with our poor litanies, we testify ! "

III

THE NORTHERN FRIARS

1. One of the chief causes of the unpopularity of the reform movement in the North of England lay in the closeness of the social relations existing between the religious orders and the people of all classes. There was scarcely a family in any north-country city, town, or village which had not some member in monastery, friary, or nunnery; this is abundantly proved by any cursory examination of the names of inmates of the various houses as given in the lists issued at the time of their suppression. The returns of commissioners and receivers give the names of those inmates who were recommended for pensions; in nearly all cases they are names well known in the particular neighbourhoods referred to. Most of the prioresses and superiors of the houses of women were ladies of old family; the old families, too, were largely represented in the houses of men, especially in those belonging to the Benedictine, Cistercian and Augustinian Orders. It was Dr. Jessopp's opinion that the thirteenth-century monk, as a rule, was drawn from the gentry class, as distinguished from the aristocracy on the one hand, or the artisan on the other; this seems to have been the case from the thirteenth cen-

tury onwards, up to the time of the Dissolution. One illustration of this may be got from the lists of abbots and priors ; another from the names given as witnesses in the various deeds and charters of the religious foundations ; a third from the names of monks mentioned in legal documents particularized in the Court Rolls. But while the monk was thus closely identified with the upper classes, the friar was intimately associated in two ways with the classes of lower degree—with the tradesman, the farmer, the artisan, with even the common labourer. Many of the friars sprang from the ranks of those who earned a living in trade, or by manual labour ; there was the further difference between monk and friar that while the monk was a man of the cloister, shut off from the world, the friar was a man of the market-place, mixing with the world. The monk was a man of prayer, meditation, reflection, study, knowing little of the men outside the walls of his particular house, Fountains, Furness, Newminster, Whalley ; the friar's sphere of action was not in the friary but in the streets outside ; he knew all men, and all men knew him. He was popular preacher and popular physician ; any street corner was his pulpit ; any case of sickness was his job ; his business lay, not in meditation nor in self-examination, but in working for other folk, their bodies as well as their souls. While the monk was found in the far-from-the-world retreats of Rievaulx and Roche, Jervaulx and Byland, the friar's sphere of action lay in the worst quarter of the busy town. Dr. Jessopp has told us, in his usual

forceful and picturesque language, of their labours: "Outside the city walls at Lynn and York and Bristol; in a filthy swamp at Norwich, through which the drainage of the city sluggishly trickled into the river, never a foot lower than its banks; in a mere barn-like structure, with walls of mud, at Shrewsbury, in the Stinking Alley in London, the Minorites took up their abode, and there they lived on charity, doing for the lowest the most menial offices, speaking to the poorest the words of hope, preaching to learned and simple such sermons—short, homely, fervent, and emotional—as the world had not heard for many a day. How could such evangelists fail to win their way?" And how, one may well ask, supplementing this, is it possible to believe that such earnest workers should not be popular with the people for whom they worked? Much has been written in the way of misrepresentation of the friars in the period immediately preceding the Reformation, but there is no trustworthy evidence to prove that they had become unpopular in the real sense of the term. On the other hand, there is a vast body of evidence which proves that in the North of England, at any rate, they were still highly popular in the early days of the sixteenth century: that evidence is plain, manifest, not to be set aside, in the wills and testamentary dispositions of the period.

2. As nearly as can be ascertained there were in England at the beginning of the reform movement some two hundred friaries. The Dominicans, or Black

Friars, held about 53 ; the Franciscans, or Grey Friars, about 60 ; the Carmelites, or White Friars, about 36 ; the Austin Friars about 42 ; in addition to these, the four principal Orders, there were or had been some smaller bodies, such as the Trinitarians ; the Crutched, or Crossed Friars ; the Bethlemites, a peculiarly English Order which had a house at Cambridge ; the Friars of the Sack, who had one house, in London ; the Friars of Our Lady, who had houses at Cambridge and Norwich ; the Friars of St. Mary de Areno, who had one house at Westminster ; the Pied Friars, who also had but one house, of brief existence, at Norwich ; and the Good Men, an English Order which had one house at Ashridge and another at Edington. As to the number of inmates of the houses of the four principal Orders, it is only possible to form an approximate idea. Gasquet estimates that the average number of members of a Franciscan friary was about 11 ; of a Dominican, 9 ; of a Carmelite, 9 ; and of an Austin, 8. According to this, there would be about 1,800 friars of various sorts in England at the time of the suppression of their houses : a very inconsiderable number in relation to the population, which was at that time probably nearer five than four millions. Nor, relatively speaking, were any of the houses remarkable for possessions ; most of them were extremely poor. Here and there, as in the case of the Franciscans of London and York, and of the Dominicans at King's Langley, the yearly revenue might approach a comparatively handsome sum, but as a rule all the friaries

were poor, which was probably the reason, or one reason, why they were not brought under the Act of 1536. The Northern friaries seem to have been in a general state of poverty. They were fairly numerous, and representative of the four principal Orders. Baildon, in his *Notes on the Religious and Secular Houses of Yorkshire*, mentions, in the text, Dominicans at Beverley; Franciscans at Doncaster; Trinitarians at Knaresborough; Carmelites and Dominicans at Scarborough; Carmelites, Dominicans, Franciscans and Austin Friars at York; and, out of the text, Franciscans at Beverley; Carmelites at Bolton Canons (a reference which I cannot trace or understand); Benedictine Friars (another curious reference) and Carmelites at Doncaster; Crutched Friars at Kildale; Dominicans, Carmelites, and Austin Friars at Hull; Austin Friars and Carmelites at North Allerton; Dominicans, Carmelites, and Franciscans at Pontefract (here, I think, is an error in Baildon's list, for I can find no proof that there was ever a Carmelite house in Pontefract, and I doubt if Leland was right in saying that he had seen the remains of a Franciscan friary there); Carmelites and Franciscans at Richmond; Franciscans at Scarborough; Carmelites at Sutton-in-Holderness and at Tickhill; Dominicans at Yarm: he also mentions a house of Crutched Friars at York. Outside Yorkshire, in the Northern Province, there were Franciscans at Hartlepool; Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites and Austin Friars at Newcastle; Dominicans and Franciscans at Carlisle;

Austin Friars at Penrith; Carmelites at Appleby; Franciscans and Dominicans at Lancaster; and Franciscans at Preston.

3. Although the friaries were not included in the Act of 1536 (27 Henry VIII, cap. 28) their inmates had been brought under surveillance in the previous year, after Cranmer had begun that visitation of his province which had for its object the obtaining of the signatures of the clergy to the declaration that the Bishop of Rome has no greater jurisdiction in England than any other foreign bishop. This was generally obtained, and was also secured from the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and from the monasteries. As it was judged necessary to obtain it also from the friars, a commission was issued to Dr. George Browne, Prior of the Augustinian Hermits, and Dr. Hilsey, Provincial of the Dominicans, empowering them to visit the friaries of each Order and require the signature of every inmate. The Franciscans offered a stout resistance, and seven houses of the Observants (Reformed Franciscans) were cleared of their inhabitants, and the more refractory members were sent to the Tower, while the less obstinate brethren were transferred to houses of the unreformed Order and were there loaded with chains. Of the wholly obstinate friars, one, John Forrest, who had been confessor to Queen Katharine, was burned to death at Smithfield, in the presence of, and after listening to a wordy exhortation to repent from, that Hugh Latimer who, some twenty years later, was himself burned at Oxford.

After this, little was done in the way of suppressing the friaries until 1538, when, on February 6th, a commission was issued to Richard Ingworth, Bishop Suffragan of Dover, sometime Prior of the Dominican house at King's Langley, empowering him to visit all houses of friars, Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Augustines, and Crutched Friars in England, with power to examine into and correct abuses, having been deputed to that office by Thomas Cromwell, described in the commission as Knight of the Garter. Shortly afterwards, Cromwell gave Ingworth a coadjutor in the person of the notorious Dr. John London, then Warden of New College, Oxford. Here again, as in the cases of Legh and Layton, we have the spectacle of thoroughly bad and unprincipled men being chosen for the task of spoliation. Ingworth, to say the least of him, was a renegade against his own Order ; we may gather what sort of man he was from the fact that he had been Cromwell's assistant for some twelve years, and was hand in glove with him. As to London, he was the vilest of all the vile sub-agents employed in this work of confiscation and destruction. He showed himself a persecutor, a slanderer, a man of brutal mind and habit ; his conduct, says Mr. Merriman, in his work on Thomas Cromwell, was so disgraceful that his master the Vicar-General was obliged to recognize the justice of the complaints lodged against him. He came to a bad end ; convicted of perjury, he was first pilloried, and then thrown into the Fleet Prison, and there he died miserably, in 1543.

4. There was little do do in the way of extracting treasure from the friaries : the real reason why their suppression was resolved upon was that the friars were still popular with the people, and strenuously resisted the introduction of the new-fangled ideas and policies. The reports of Ingworth and London prove that there was little to be got for that rapacious receptacle, the King's Treasury. Ingworth's letters to Cromwell show that most of the houses he visited were not only poor but in debt. In one letter he says that he has just received to the King's use the surrender of twelve houses ; one at Huntingdon, four at Boston, four at Lincoln, one at Grantham, one at Newark, and one at Grimsby ; all were in poverty, and the King will profit by nothing but the lead, the bells, and the communion vessels, none of which he sets down at more than six to ten ounces' weight in silver. He says of Canterbury that all the friaries there were in debt ; the Austin Friars owed £40, and all their belongings, if sold, would not fetch beyond £20 more than their liabilities. He tells the same story of Ware, Walsingham, and Dunstable; there was nothing much left of lead, plate, or other valuables. Ingworth's coadjutor, London, has the same tale to tell. The Carmelites of Northampton, he says, are so much in debt that if all their belongings are sold they will still be beholden ; the friars at Aylesbury are in the same condition. Both Ingworth and London charged the heads of friaries with getting rid of valuables—a common charge, not infrequently made against monks by Legh,

Layton, and Ap Rice. The Prior of the Austin Friars at Droitwich, says Ingworth, previous to his, Ingworth's visit, felled and sold the wood of seven score elm trees, disposed of a silver-gilt chalice of 90 ounces, a thurible of 26 ounces, two great brass pots, and all the beds, sheets, platters, and dishes. Now and then both visitors found friars courageous enough to withstand them. One such was friar Stone, of the Austin house at Canterbury, who so flouted Ingworth to his face that he was arrested, and before long put to death. In the records of the city of Canterbury there is preserved the account of the arrangements made and expenses incurred by the civic authorities for carrying out his execution. They bought half a ton of timber to make a gallows whereon to hang him. They paid a carpenter to make the gallows, and four men who helped to set it up, and a labourer who dug the necessary holes in the earth; the timber cost something to carry from Staplegate to the Dane John, and all the men employed cost something else in drink. Then they expended money on a hurdle whereon to draw the friar, and on a load of wood, and on a horse to draw the hurdle. With the load of wood and with a purchase of straw they made a fire; on this they set a great vessel described as a kettle, and in the kettle they placed the friar and parboiled him: finally they parted with more money to a woman who cleaned out the kettle after the parboiling was done, and still more to two men who, when the executioner had duly quartered the victim, carried the quarters to be

set up on the gates of Canterbury. As for the executioner, he got four shillings and fourpence, which we may call four guineas, for his share in the job. Drastic work this, but Ingworth, in spite of his share in it, was not thorough-going enough for Thomas Cromwell, who more than once rebuked him for his slackness, and said sarcastically that though he had changed his friar's habit, he had not changed his friar's heart, and was secretly sympathizing with his victims. London, a rough bully, was more to Cromwell's taste. He was noted for his vandalism and for his sharp methods of seizing on all he could get. His letters to Cromwell are full of his exploits in razing religious houses to the ground ; defacing churches ; smashing windows ; laying hands on ornaments, plate, vestments, wherever there was anything worth taking : we hear of his progress through Aylesbury, Bedford, Stamford, Coventry, Warwick, Northampton, Reading, Oxford ; wherever he moves, ruin is left behind him.

5. In the spring of 1538 Ingworth was in the North, and on March 10th he writes to Cromwell to the effect that since he saw him last he has received sixteen convents of friars into his hands to the King's use, but that there are still standing in those parts about ten houses, besides three or four in Berwick (there was only one there, a Trinitarian), and he does not intend to ride as far as that, as it would be a hundred miles out of his way. He is now, he says, at Scarborough, where he has received three poor houses of friars, black, white, and grey, to the King's use

but they are so poverty-stricken that they have already sold the stalls and parcloses in their churches, and have nothing left but stone and glass. Still, there is good lead in these places; he thinks about forty fodder of it; every friary, he continues, has good lead, and he has secured it to the King's grace, and also the bells and the chalices; the chalices, he observes, are poor, and other plate he can find none. Now, he continues, he shall ride, as soon as the weather will suffer him, to Carlisle and Lancaster, visiting other houses by the way if he can hear of any, and he trusts by God's grace to see his good lord Cromwell on Palm Sunday. Nearly a month later, on April 1st, he writes again to Cromwell; this is a letter in which he seems to sum up the results of his labours in the North. He has received the surrender of twenty-six houses of friars; they were all he could hear of. In the twenty-six there were in all nine score inmates, and the houses themselves were the poorest he had ever seen. All the best in England, he remarks, had been already dealt with by other visitors; few of any substance were left to him. And he feels rebuked in himself that he can bring no more substance to the King's Grace. Nevertheless he beseeches Cromwell, in the way of charity, to be good lord to him for some assurance of the living of Langley.

6. Ingworth, no doubt, left Yorkshire and the North after writing this letter, and we hear of him no more in connection with the Northern Province, into which, as far as one can ascertain, his coadjutor

London never travelled. But there were other men left in the North who were engaged on the same sort of work, and we shall gain a very good idea of what was actually done by such men if we take a particular instance and consider all its details as they are given to us in carefully preserved papers and documents. In 1538 four commissioners duly appointed by the Crown were very busy in various parts of Yorkshire receiving the surrenders of religious houses by negotiation. These four were Sir George Lawson, Richard Bellasis, William Blitheman, and John Rokeby. On December 15th they write to Cromwell that they have received the surrenders of Worksop, Monk Bretton, St. Andrew's at York, Byland, Rievaulx, Kirkham, and Ellerton, and of the friars at Tickhill, Doncaster, Pontefract, and York. They appear to have been as expeditious in their labours as Legh and Layton were in theirs ; in one week, for example, between November 21st and November 28th, they visited Monk Bretton, the Dominican house at Pontefract, the Dominicans at York, St. Andrew's at York, and Byland Abbey. The accounts and papers of the suppression of all these houses are in the Public Record Office : the surrender deed of the Dominicans of Pontefract is, according to Holmes, in as perfect condition as when it was signed. Let us take this particular instance as a good example, and learn from it what was actually done at the time of the suppression of the friaries.

7. The Dominican Priory at Pontefract, founded by

Edward de Lacy about 1250 in honour of Our Lady, and of St. Dominic, and of St. Richard (Bishop of Chichester, who had been Edward's tutor) stood at the west end of the town, on a site the exact whereabouts of which it is now exceedingly difficult to define with accuracy, but was probably at or near the junction of the roads leading west to Wakefield, and east to Darrington. Little is known of its earliest history. But from about the middle of the fourteenth century particulars of testamentary bequests begin to be frequent. In August 1341 Elizabeth, relict of Thomas Peytevin of Headingly, leaves to the Friars Preachers of Pontefract forty shillings. In 1351, in a will executed in 1349, at the time of the Black Death, Henry de Percy leaves to the Friar Preachers of Pontefract, Yarm, Lancaster, and Newcastle, six pounds sterling in equal shares. In 1379 Sir Robert Swillington leaves to the Friar Preachers of Pontefract 13s. 4d.; in 1382 Elizabeth, widow of Sir Nicholas Wortley, leaves 6s. 8d.; in 1394 Sir Brian Stapleton leaves 13s. 4d.; in 1396 Robert de Morton of Bawtrey leaves five marks; in 1404 Thomas Fenay leaves 6s. 8d.; in 1406 Sir John Scot leaves five marks; in 1430 6s. 8d. is bequeathed by Oliver Woodrove: the same amount is left by Robert Methley, fishmonger, of Pontefract, in 1443. The will of this man is particularly interesting, as showing how in the middle of the fifteenth century, just a hundred years before the Reformation, the tradesfolk in their testa-

mentary dispositions were generous to the Church, for Methley remembered several religious institutions in his will, and left money to various ecclesiastics, amongst whom was Thomas Methley, *filio meo, canonico*. From this time the testamentary bequests increase in number and often in value, and it is a highly significant fact that they continue to the time of the suppression of the religious houses—a sure proof that the friars were still held in high esteem by the people.

8. Certain of these wills are of great interest in relation to the last days of the houses they affect. In nearly every case they are the wills of local residents ; their originals may be seen in the local registries. John Lathom, Dean of St. Clement's Chapel in the Castle of Pontefract, sometime chaplain to Cardinal Kemp, Archbishop of York, left in 1476 to every brother of the house of Friars Preachers at Pontefract who should say mass for him on the day of his obit, 12d. ; to every other brother, not being in priest's orders, who should assist thereat, 6d., and to the prior, 20d. Richard Rawson, a local man who went to London and made his fortune as a mercer, left the Dominicans of Pontefract 40s. in 1483 ; in 1489 Sir Hugh Hastings, of the neighbouring village of Norton, left them a quarter of wheat and 10s. for three years. Bequests in kind were somewhat common about this period : William Struther (1496) leaves 20s., a quarter of malt, and a bushel of peas ; John Bale (1507) leaves a quarter of malt to the Black Friars, and a

quarter of barley to the parish church. Malt was left by Robert Furnell—half of a quarter—in 1506, and by Johanna Hewet—a wyndle—in 1521. Still more interesting are the bequests of Thomas Huntingdon, a Pontefract man who settled in Hull, did well there, and remembered his native town generously in his last will. He gave to the Black Friars of Pontefract 20s. for his dirge and his mass, and he further bequeathed to them three acres of land at St. Thomas's Hill, and two acres of land in the Chequer Fields. As regards this behest of land there is some mystery, for it was certainly not in possession of the Pontefract Dominicans in 1538, when the commissioners seized on all they had. Between 1527, the date of the probate of Thomas Huntingdon's will and 1538, bequests to this house of the Friars Preachers never stayed: they were, as Holmes points out in his monograph on the Pontefract Dominicans, sure evidence of the continuity and persistence of the feeling in favour of the friars; indeed, during the thirty years immediately preceding the suppression there were more donations to this particular house that it had ever known in the whole course of its history.

9. Before dealing with what actually occurred at the suppression of a friary, it may be well to epitomize the instructions given to the Commissioners appointed to carry out the suppression. Having repaired to the house in question, they were first to demand delivery of the common and convent seals, and having taken them into their hands were to break them, or put them

in safety for the King's use. They were then to summon the head of the house and make him declare, upon oath, the state and plight of his house, and what leases, corrodies, fees and the like were in existence, dating from before February 1536. That done, they were to make a true inventory of the lead, bells, superfluous buildings, and of all plate, jewels, ornaments, goods, chattels, debts, corn, stock, and stores, afterwards surveying all the possessions, spiritual and temporal, of the house. They were to make enquiry into debts due to the house, and take into custody for the King's use all evidences and writings. Then, after appointing pensions to them, they were to turn the head of the house and his monks, or friars, as the case might be, out of doors, without further ceremony. Subsequently they were to sell all the corn, grain, household stuff, and the like, but not the lead, bells, plate, jewels, and principal ornaments: these were to be held for the King. They were to pay all wages due to servants, and all debts due for corn, cattle, and victuals, and all other debts not exceeding £6 13s. 4d. Finally, they were to hand over the buildings to such persons as the King might appoint, and in due course and by the day stated render an account of all their proceedings under their seals and signs manual.

10. There is evidence, from the documents relating to the suppression of this Pontefract friary that the proceedings of the Commissioners there were of an exceedingly summary nature, and were carried through

in the course of a few hours. There was apparently no difficulty in obtaining the surrender: Holmes gives a translation of it from the original Latin:

To all the faithful in Christ, to whom this present writing shall come. Robert Daye otherwise called Robert Daye Prior or Warden of the Friars Preachers within the town of Pontefract in the County of York and the convent of that place everlasting health in the Lord. Know that the aforesaid Prior or Warden and the Convent with unanimous assent and consent and with deliberate intentions of our sure knowledge and our own motion for specially just causes and reasons specially influencing our minds and consciences voluntarily and of our own accord have given granted and by these presents give and grant surrender deliver and confirm to the Prince illustrious in Christ and our Lord Henry the Eighth by the Grace of God King of England and France Defender of the Faith Lord of Ireland and on earth Supreme Head under Christ of the English Church all our said priory or house and all the site ground circuit and precincts of the same our house et cetera to hold to the aforesaid et cetera and to our Lord the King his heirs and assigns for ever. And we the aforesaid Prior or Warden and convent and our successors will by these presents for ever warrant and defend against all men to the aforesaid our Lord the King his heirs and assigns our said conventual house the site the mansion and our church aforesaid and all and every the premises with all rights and appurtenances. In testimony and of guarantee of which we the aforesaid Prior or Warden and Convent have caused to be affixed to these presents our common seal. Given in our Chapter House the twenty-sixth day of the month of November in the thirtieth year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth.—*Robert Day, Prior, Richard Lord, D.D., Henry Chaloner, George Lesbury, Andrew Nick, William Bramley, Thomas Rawling, William Chandler.*

11. The surrender duly executed, the Commissioners seem to have proceeded at once to sell the friars' poor effects. The account of the sale, rendered by Blitheman, a man of great experience in these affairs, is in Ministers' Accounts 29–30, Henry VIII,

No. 197: Holmes believes that Blitheman himself bought in most of the lots. The sale began by disposing of a suit of blue worsted [vestments] to Richard Welbore, Mayor of Pontefract, for 16s. An old suit of vestments of a mulberry colour went to a stranger for 13s. 4d. Another set of vestments, known as the Taylor suit, fetched 20s. Two worn-out vestments fetched 5s. Two surplices and three altar cloths produced 3s. 4d.; one pair of candlesticks and one thurible sixteen pence. This seems to have been all there was in the church, except a chalice, weighing nine ounces, for which nobody would bid more than twopence; the Commissioners reserved it. Proceeding to the outbuildings they sold what they found there. Four brass pots, two spits, four iron set-pots, one ladle, one brass skimmer, one old cupboard, fetched, in all, 10s. An old cope or cape, bought by Sir George Lawson's servant, produced the same price; a brewing lead went for 9s.; all the rest of the stuff, lumped together in outbuildings and pantry, realized 2s. Then came the turn of the household furniture. The feather beds, bolsters, and coverlets of the guest chamber produced 8s. 8d.; this was just eight pence more than was got by the sale of the entire contents of the friars' cells. The lead was not sold, nor the bells, nor certain lead and brass articles left in charge of the Mayor: who was also entrusted with the stewardship of a bit of land worth £3 14s. 4d. a year. There was no money owing to the house. The total proceeds of the sale amounted to £5 10s. 4d.

12. There was now nothing left for the Commissioners to do but the discharging of those clauses in their instructions which bade them appoint what was euphemistically termed pensions to the prior and his brethren, and then turn them out of doors. But in the accounts we do not find any mention of pensions. What we do find is particulars of gifts made to the expelled friars as from the Lord King—no doubt accompanied by suitable encomiums by the distributors on the Lord King's grace and goodness in being so generous as to make them. Robert Day, the prior, was presented with 13s. 4d. The six friars received 5s. each; William Chandler, though he was only a novice, also got 5s. Then the community was bidden to depart, and the Commissioners, locking the doors of the stripped cloister and the desecrated church went on their way to demolish more friaries. We hear a good deal about them in the course of the next few months, but upon the dispossessed religious we get little or no light. Still we hear something of Prior Robert Day. In 1545 James Thwaytes, last Prior of the Cluniac Priory of St. John of Pontefract, died at Darrington, whither he had retired on the suppression of his house, and in his will he left something to Robert Day of Lumby, near Sherburn, formerly Prior of the Dominicans at Pontefract. Now Robert had been at one time holder of the Chantry of St. Thomas, which held land at Lumby, and the probability is that when he was turned out of his priory he retired to Lumby, a singularly out-of-the-way place,

and there passed his last days in quietude. But of his six brethren, and of William the novice, we hear no more after they go out of the gate, thrown on the world with the royal gift of five shillings between them and starvation.

13. Whatever the fate of these men and their brethren in other parts of the North may have been there is no doubt about that of others who, from personal inclination or sheer force of circumstance, were drawn into prominence at the troublous time of the upheaval. The evidence looks as if Prior Robert Day, dispossessed, spent the remainder of his earthly life in comparative peace and quietness, in the seclusion of an obscure country vicarage. Probably he was a man of unassuming nature, caring nothing for the limelight. But there were those of his own Order in Yorkshire who were ready, with an eagerness and a boldness not usually associated with the cloister, to throw themselves into the fray as leaders and champions when the discontented North rose against the King. Such a one was John Pickering, who, according to Holmes, was Prior of the Dominicans at York, but had later taken refuge at the Augustinian Priory of Bridlington. Pickering was one of the many poets of the movement. Ballad-making and spinning of rhymes (doggerel enough, judging by most of the specimens that have survived) seems to have been highly popular amongst the followers of Aske. "Henry," remark the authors of *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, "issued sermons and exhortations—the pilgrims replied with

poems." One such production, the hymn or ballad sung by the revolutionaries on march, under the famous Banner of the Five Wounds of Christ, is well known, especially for its references to the hated Members of the King's Council, Cromwell, Cranmer, Riche, and the equally loathed Legh, Layton, and the Bishops of Lincoln and Lichfield, and for its description of the privations wrought by the dissolution of the religious houses :

Great God's fame
Doth church proclaim
Now to be lame,
  And fast in bonds.
Robbed, spoiled, and shorn,
From cattle and corn,
And clean forth borne
  Of houses and lands.

Alack, alack,
For the Church's sake
Poor Commons wake,
  And no marvel.
For clear it is,
The decay of this,
How the poor shall miss
  No tongue can tell.

For there they had
Both ale and bread,
At time of need,
  And succour great ;
In all distress,
And heaviness,
In our poorness,
  And well intreat.

When Hallam went back to his East Riding home at

Watton after the Pilgrims had dispersed from Pontefract, he carried with him, according to Letters and Papers, *temp*. Henry VIII, a parcel of " certain rhymes made against my lord privy seal, my lord Chancellor, the Chancellor of the Augmentations, and divers bishops of the new learning, which rhymes had been sung abroad by minstrels." Hallam showed these rhymes to Pickering ; Pickering, who was probably of some learning, considered them rude and clumsy, and in order to give the discontented something better to sing " composed a long poem in the elaborate Latin style which seems to have been the fashion then in Yorkshire. He ' made the said rhyme by rhyme that the hearers might better bear it away, but not that it might be sung by minstrels,' and he himself showed it only to a few friends, who all praised it. Nevertheless it soon spread abroad and ' was in every man's mouth about Bridlington and Scarborough.' It is difficult to understand how anyone could sing the verses, for they have none of the rugged charm of the Pilgrims' marching song. They are long-winded, involved, and interspersed with scraps of Latin. The Pilgrims are compared first to the Maccabees, afterwards to Mordecai, with Cromwell in the character of Hamon :

> This cruel Hamon by his false invention
> In the North doth perceive the faithful Commonty,
> By his great expenses intending utterly
> As to destroy and bring in captivity.
> But great God above that ever doth procure
> For His faithful people all that is necessary,

> And ever provide I you do ensure
> His falsehood to be known and eke his policy.
> No fair words we shall trust after my opinion
> But boldly go forward in our peregrination.

The gist of the poem is an exhortation to be loyal to the King, but to fight to the death against Cromwell " (*The Pilgrimage of Grace*, vol i, 281). In spite of the counsel of loyalty Pickering's action in writing these verses excited Henry's special and particular anger: Pickering, moreover, had taken part in the Pilgrimage, and had been present at the council of clergy held at Pontefract under Archbishop Lee, and had there argued strongly against the King's claim to supremacy in matters of religion. Later, he took part in Bigod's supplementary rising, and orders were given for his arrest. He evaded capture for some weeks, but he was taken in March 1537, and on the 25th May following, in company with several others, was hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn, and his limbs distributed between London Bridge and the City gates.

14. This was an enduring to the death; there were other North country friars, of one Order or another, who were equally courageous. But there was at least one who preferred safety to heroism, and flight to facing death as a martyr. Richard Marshall was Prior of the Dominicans of Newcastle, a learned man, educated at Oxford, skilled in theological knowledge, an able disputant. He spoke strongly against the new-fangled doctrine of Royal supremacy—so much so, indeed, that he soon knew his head to be in danger. And then, instead of remaining at his post to emulate

the martyrs of old, he took a course which is set forth in this curious letter of his, reprinted (from the *Reliquary*, 1878) by Fr. Bede Jarrett in his work on *The English Dominicans*, and notable as showing the workings of at any rate one man's mind at this critical period : " Fathers and Brethren," writes Prior Richard, addressing his fellows of the Dominican convent in Newcastle, " I recommend me unto you, desiring to hear of your good welfare, which Jesu preserve ever to His pleasure. The cause of my writing to you in this time to show that for fear of my life I am fled, for because of my preaching in Advent and also in Lent the first Sunday, I am noted to be none of the King's friends, though albeit that I love the man as a true Christian man ought to do, but by cause that I have not, according to the King's commandment, in my sermons prayed for him as the Supreme Head of the Church, neither declaring him in my sermons to be the Supreme Head of the Church, but rather contrary I have declared St. Peter the Apostle and his successors to be Christ's Vicars on Earth, and that unto Peter Christ gave the care and charge of all the churches of the world, and that unto other apostles Christ gave the care and charge of other particular churches, some of one country, and some of another (thus did I, the forenoon of the first Sunday) ; of the which words it followeth that the King cannot be the Supreme Head of the Church of England but rather the successors of Peter. I was also admonished shortly to preach in Newcastle, and both to pray for him as

the Supreme Head and also so to declare him with the people, which thing I cannot do lawfully, first because it is against the Scripture of God, taken in a true sense; second, it is against the doctrine of the Church Catholic and Apostolic, as it appeareth in the decrees, decretals, etc., which doctrine I was sworn openly in the University of Oxford to declare it to my power, and ever to stick unto it, and that I should never affirm anything, neither in schools nor in preaching nor elsewhere that is contrary to the determination of the same Church, Catholic and Apostolic. Thirdly, that it is against many General Councils. Fourthly, that it is against the interpretation of all the holy doctors as Irenius, Cyprian, Augustine, Jerome, etc. Fifthly, that it is against the doctrine of all the Universities and general schools of all Christendom, a few certain universities excepted, lately corrupt and poisoned with Luther's heresies. Sixthly, that it is against the consent of all Christian people, which has received Peter's successors as Supreme Head of the Church Catholic evermore unto this time. Seventhly, that it is against my profession which I made to be obedient unto the Master of the Holy (Dominican) Order and successors according to the institutions of Friars Preachers, who in it evidently declare that *ordo noster est summo Pontifici Romano immediate subjectus*. For these seven causes I cannot lawfully do as I was commanded of the King in his letters, neither as I was admonished of his servant and chaplain. Wherefore I could not abide in England without falling

in the King's indignation, which, as the Scripture says, is death: *Indignatio, inquit, principis mors est.* Thus I have thought it better for me to flee and give place to ire as Christ commanded me to do, and as both He and His disciples, with many other good men, have done and daily do than I would tarry and preach false doctrine against my conscience, or yet to tarry and suffer death as others have done, for *spiritus quidem promptus est caro autem infirma.* I am in heart well willing to die in these my opinions, notwithstanding I feel my flesh grog with death. Wherefore, Fathers and dear Brethren all, for the premises in this present writing I give up my office and request you to choose you another prior. Secondly, I beseech you all to pray for me as your poor brother in Christ, and now in Christ's cause departed from you. So committing myself to you in Jesu, who ever save you all, as I would be saved myself. Amen." Marshall fled to Scotland, where many other friars of his own and other Orders sought refuge, some remaining there in obscurity, some escaping thence to the Continent. Certain of these men returned to England after the death of Edward VI and for a time the Dominicans resumed their lectures at Oxford, but the ancient organizations had been thoroughly broken under Cromwell's sway, and after 1558 it would have been difficult to find open wearing of the friar's habit, black, white, brown, or ashen-grey.

IV

HENRY THE EIGHTH IN YORKSHIRE

1. The wisest Churchman of the sixteenth century, Erasmus of Rotterdam, tells us in a letter to his friend, Faustus Anderlin, that during his first visit to England, in the year 1497, he was taken by Thomas More to see the children of Henry VII, then resident at the Royal Palace of Eltham. He was greatly struck with the regal bearing, at once lofty and gentle, of the miser-King's second son, a boy of nine, who bore his father's name, and at that time had no expectation of succeeding to the Crown and becoming famous for ever as Henry the Eighth. With the young Henry were his two sisters, Margaret, afterwards Queen of Scotland, and Mary, afterwards Queen of France, and a younger brother, Edmond, a child in arms, who died a few years later. Erasmus goes on to say that his companion, More, presented Prince Henry with some complimentary writing which he had prepared in anticipation; Erasmus, not knowing that he was to be introduced to the royal children, had come unprepared. Henry, young as he was at that time, had heard of the fame of Erasmus as a scholar, and while Erasmus and More sat at dinner he sent Erasmus a note challenging him to give an exhibition of his

powers. Erasmus felt it beyond him to improvise an immediate answer to the boy's challenge, but a few days later he composed a poem in laudation of the English royal family, and doubtless took good care to include in it special reference to the undoubted genius of the prince whose subsequent career was destined to be far more remarkable and eventful than Erasmus could have foreseen. The interesting fact about this interview is that Erasmus was greatly impressed with the young prince and found him at once lofty and gentle—the last term is one which is not usually associated with Henry in our modern conception of him. But between the Henry of the first phase and the Henry of the second there is a vast difference: Henry as a youth, and in the first stage of his kingship, was probably one of the most likable and popular personalities in Europe; what he was in his later stages is only too well known to history. After the beginning of the liaison with Anne Boleyn, and the throwing aside of the early friends and counsellors like Wolsey and Thomas More, Henry became a changed man, and most people nowadays think of him as the tyrant who never spared man in his anger nor woman in his lust. This was not the Henry of early manhood. Brewer, in his preface to the first edition of *Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII*, gives us a brilliant, incisive picture of the young monarch. " At his accession to the Crown he was in the prime of youth and manly beauty. Had he lived in a more poetic age and died

before his divorce, he might, without any great effort of imagination, have stood for the hero of an epic poem. He possessed just those qualities which Englishmen admire in their rulers at all times—a fund of good temper, occasionally broken by sudden bursts of anger, vast muscular strength, and unflinching courage. In stature he towered above all his contemporaries. From the brilliant crowd that surrounded him he could at once be distinguished by his commanding figure, and the superior graces of his person. . . . He spoke French, Italian, and Spanish. Of his proficiency in Latin a specimen has been preserved among the letters of Erasmus. . . . In the business of the State he was, with the exception of Wolsey, the most assiduous man in his dominions. . . . Among his lighter accomplishments, still more rare among the sovereigns and nobility of that age, was his skill in the practice and theory of music . . . he was constant in practice of the lute, organ, and harpsichord . . . the vast number of warrants, letters, and despatches which every day demanded his attention and required his signature . . . is entirely at variance with the popular notion that he gave himself up wholly to amusement, and was indifferent to more serious occupations. . . . To his hearty compliance with the national humour, which no subsequent acts, however arbitrary or cruel, could altogether obliterate —to the impression produced by his frankness and good humour—to his unquestionable courage and ability to hold his own against all comers, without

the adventitious aid of his exalted position—Henry VIII owed much of that popularity which seems unintelligible to modern notions . . . it is almost impossible to exaggerate his popularity during those early years, or the fascination which he exercised over the minds of his subjects." There are, indeed, few blots on the early record of the great King, who, in his later life, made so many on every page he turned. Learned himself, as befitted one, who, if his elder brother had lived, was to have been trained for the Church and made Archbishop of Canterbury, he delighted in the company of learned and wise men; we see him leaning affectionately on More's shoulder as he walked with him in the garden at Chelsea, discoursing of high things. Expert in theology, he delighted in writing the book against Luther (*Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*) which gained for him from Pope Leo X the title of Defender of the Faith, since borne by every succeeding English monarch. It is a curious thing, as Gairdner points out, that the only one of Henry's councillors who doubted the wisdom of Henry's warm advocacy of the papal claims in that book was Sir Thomas More himself, who suggested "from a mere politician's point of view, that it might be well to leave that part of the matter out, or at least to touch it more gently, lest the King should hereafter have some dispute with the head of the Church at Rome. But the King replied warmly that he would not abate one word of what he had said on that point, and further declared to More a secret reason for

maintaining it so strongly; of which reason Sir Thomas had never heard before, and which must remain to us a matter of speculation. As a result of further reading and study, however, More stated in later years that he finally came to the conclusion that the King was right, and that his own conscience would be in right great peril if he denied the Pope's primacy to be provided by God."

2. In this earlier stage, then, there is little in Henry VIII with which we can find fault. He was certainly extravagant; he ran through the millions left to him by his avaricious father at a rare rate, though, to be sure, much of the money was spent wisely in improving the Navy. There was little against his moral character; taking him altogether at this time it is as Dr. Brewer says—if he had died before the divorce, he might have figured to all time as the hero of a national epic. When, then, did the extraordinary cleavage occur between the Henry of the first phase and the Henry of the second? Undoubtedly, when he first set eyes on the woman who ruined his life—Anne Boleyn. For some years Anne exercised an influence over Henry which is not usually estimated at its full importance; she was responsible for the fall of Wolsey, and for the gradual severance of the King from his previous ways of thinking and his former counsellors. She surrounded him, or helped to surround him, with men like Cromwell, and Audley, and Riche—poor exchanges for Wolsey and More: little wonder that the disaffected of the

North under Robert Aske, drawing up their petition at Pontefract, should lay special stress on the influence of villain blood at the Council. Henry's career is signalized by rapid deterioration of character from the time Anne Boleyn appears on the scene ; by the time she disappears, convicted of infidelity to the man whom she had carefully kept at arm's length until he could lay a crown at her feet, it had still further deteriorated, and Henry had become the man that he remained for the rest of his life, arbitrary, tyrannical, cruel. The will to absolutism increased and became more manifest as the years went on ; it was not merely supremacy in Church and State that Henry claimed, but supremacy in the sense of imposing one man's will upon, and often against, the desires of a nation. His method is well illustrated in his setting up of the King's Council in the North, a Court which came to be as much hated in the Northern Parts as the more famous Star Chamber was in the South, and of which Coke, in his *Institutes* (*c.* 49) remarks " This Council is neither warranted by Act of Parliament, nor by prescription, but raised by King Henry 8 by his commission." The common-law judges in the time of Elizabeth held certain proceedings of the Council of the North to be illegal ; it was finally abolished as a Council by the Act of 1641, which put an end to the Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission at the same time. But whether illegal, or partly illegal, the Council of the North under Henry VIII, and Edward VI, and

Elizabeth, proved itself, as Dr. Tanner calls it in his *Tudor Documents*, " a most efficient instrument of the central government."

3. Henry's intentions as regards the foundation of his Council were conveyed to the Duke of Norfolk in a letter written in June 1537, in which the King states that he proposes " to establish a standing Council there (at York) for the conservation of those (Northern) Counties in quiet, and the administration of common justice." The Commission was issued a month later: in effect, there were two Commissions, one empowering the Council to hear and determine cases of treason, murder, felony, and the like ; the other to adjudicate on causes between party and party. The area of jurisdiction extended over Yorkshire, Durham, Westmorland, Cumberland, and Northumberland, including the cities and towns of York, Durham, Kingston-upon-Hull, and Newcastle-on-Tyne. As regards the constitution of the Council, the Duke of Norfolk remained as Lieutenant ; Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, was President (afterwards, on the retirement of Norfolk, Lord President), the members were the Earls of Westmorland and Cumberland, Sir Thomas Tempest, Sir William Eure, Sir Marmaduke Constable, Sir Ralph Ellerker, Sir Brian Hastings, Thomas Fairfax, serjeant-at-law, Sir Robert Bowes, Master of the Rolls, Sir William Babthorpe, Dr. Magnus, Archdeacon of the East Riding, Dr. Thirleby, and Dr. Curwen ; John Uvedale acted as Secretary. It will be noticed at once that some of these men

had been concerned in the Pilgrimage of Grace. "Henry VIII," observes Miss Reid in her book, *The King's Council in the North*, "seldom if ever gave surer proof of his very real statesmanship than in the choice he made of the 'personages of honour, worship, and learning'" who were to form the Council. "No fitter agents of the royal will," she continues, "could well have been found than the quondam leaders of the Northern rising. Their inclusion in the Commission naturally seemed to the gentlemen a sure proof that the King's pardon extended to offices as well as to life and lands. At the same time the Commission laid on them the duty of crushing the second rising and confirmed the commons in their belief that they had been betrayed. The part they had to play in the indictment, trial, and execution of their kinsmen and friends, and of the monks whose cause they had professed to defend, completed their isolation and made them perfect tools for their royal master. The Government of the North could safely be entrusted to them, since there was none to whom they might look for help if they offended the King." We shall see that the newly-constituted Council had no intention of offending the King; when Tunstall retired from the Lord Presidency, a little later, and was succeeded by Robert Holgate, then Bishop of Llandaff, a creature of Henry's and wholly subservient to him, it became a principal weapon in the hands of the Crown for crushing the hopes and nullifying the actions of the Northern peoples, and

still later, in Elizabeth's time, under Young, and after him, under Huntingdon, the chief means of spreading the new forms of religion amongst the unwilling folk.

4. While the Council of the North set to work on its task of imposing the royal will in the counties allocated to it, Henry himself was busy enough in the South. So was Cromwell. As a direct insult to the Papacy, the Shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury was pulled down, the gold, silver, and jewels belonging to it carted off to the King's Treasury, and what remained of Becket's bones burnt—contemptuously, says Gairdner. Cromwell, as the King's vicegerent, ordered a copy of the English Bible to be set up in every church, and instructed the clergy to admonish their parishioners to read it: about the same time he got from Henry a commission which forbade the printing or sale of any Bible not approved by Cromwell himself—the pretext for this was the avoidance of diversity in translations; the real reason was the putting of money into Cromwell's own pocket: he had invested money in the printing of the Bibles, and by securing a monopoly he thought to get it back, with profit. Nor was the placing of the Bibles in the churches out of any regard for the people: Mr. Merriman declares plainly that Cromwell's object was purely political. But there were other matters in 1538 and 1539. The Anabaptists became busy and obnoxious: a Commission was issued against them and their books. And as Henry was now virtually Pope, and able to exercise more

power in England than any Pope had ever possessed, he declared his royal will about certain matters. No books of Scripture—portions—were to be sold without leave—the leave was to be had from none but Cromwell. Nobody but learned divines was to dispute about the nature of the Sacrament. Holy bread, holy water, creeping to the Cross on Good Friday, setting up lights before Corpus Christi, carrying lights at Candlemas, and many other ancient ceremonies, were to remain in use—till the King pleased. Any priest who had married was to be deprived of his cure. Any priest marrying in future was to be sent to prison. As if to show that he was in dead earnest about these and kindred subjects, Henry, in November 1538, presided in person at a heresy trial, the defendant being one John Nicholson, who had declared that it is sinful to pray to saints: John refused to recant, even to the King, and was accordingly burned to death. We may put John down as a Protestant; a month later several men of the opposite camp, the Marquess of Exeter, Lord Montague, and a number of their dependants were either beheaded, or hanged, drawn, and quartered. Men began to ask themselves on which side they should be safe: the King burned John Nokes on Monday for being a Protestant, and Thomas Stokes on Tuesday for being a Papist. To make things clear, Henry, or Parliament instigated and taught by Cromwell, passed the famous Act of the Six Articles, known to those who hated it as the "Whip of Six Strings." The first article laid down

that in the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar there is really present under the form of bread and wine the natural body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, no substance of bread or wine remaining after the consecration, but only the substance of Christ, God and man. The second, that communion in both kinds is not necessary *ad salutem*, by the law of God, to all persons, but that in the Flesh, under the form of bread, is the Very Blood, and in the Blood under the form of wine is the Very Flesh, as well apart as though they were both together. The third, that by the law of God, priests may not marry. The fourth, that vows of chastity or widowhood made to God advisedly, ought to be observed. The fifth, that private masses should be continued and admitted in this the King's English Church. And the sixth, that auricular confession is expedient and necessary to be retained, and continued, used and frequented in the Church of God. Such were the provisions of the famous Act which caused Latimer to resign the bishopric of Worcester, and Shaxton his of Salisbury, forced Cranmer to put away his wife, and gave sad offence to those folk who had been hoping for a general setting up of something like Lutheranism. For what was this religion of Henry's, imposed by an Act of Parliament, and to be imposed on every subject under pain of death by burning and loss of property? Gairdner answers that question in one sharp sentence: *It was the old religion, with the Pope left out.*

5. But the Act of the Six Articles did not settle everything. There were vast numbers of people in the country, and especially in the Northern parts, who wanted the old religion as they had always known it, Pope and all; there was a smaller, but very active faction which wanted, it was not quite sure what, but some mixture of the various compounds invented by Luther, or Calvin, or Bullinger, or some other crank of the Continent. Henry had a bad time between them, and in April 1540 he sent Cromwell to the House of Lords to say what the King was thinking. His Majesty, said Cromwell, desirous of nothing so much as of concord, knew right well that tares had sprung up in the field of religion. Some people were going about calling other people Papists; these flung back at their revilers the word Heretic. Such discord was not to be endured—moreover, those to whom his Majesty had graciously granted the right to read the Bible in their own tongue had wretchedly abused the privilege, turning it to support of erroneous doctrines and superstitions. Now the King was determined to have true doctrine established, and to that end he was going to appoint a committee to draw up a learned work settling matters once for all. This was the beginning of the book afterwards published under its title of *The Institution of a Christian Man*—but it was also the beginning of something else. "Henry," says Gairdner, "was coming gradually to the conclusion that no further use could be made of Protestantism abroad, and that

he must not encourage it again at home. The whole policy of Cromwell must be laid aside, and the minister himself, of course, must be sacrificed to that clamour which, as in Wolsey's case, was quite ready to break out as soon as the support of the King himself was withdrawn." For a few weeks longer Henry made use of Cromwell, but on June 10th he was arrested, and the man who had sent countless victims to the gallows and the block found himself led to the Tower, and when he was lodged there, knew better than any of his gaolers that there would be no way out of it for him but by the headman's axe.

6. It is doubtful if Cromwell anticipated his fall from power. He was busied in the King's service until the very end of May. But his fall had been prophesied. When Lord Darcy, who boasted of himself that " Old Tom has not one traitor's tooth in his head," was under examination before the Lord Chancellor and the Council for his share in the Pilgrimage of Grace, he turned on Cromwell in bold denunciation of the upstart and his misdeeds— " Cromwell, it is thou that art the very original and chief causer of all this rebellion and mischief, and art likewise causer of the apprehension of us that be noble men, and dost earnestly travail to bring us to our end and to strike off our heads, and I trust that or thou die, though thou wouldst procure all the noblemen's heads within the realm to be stricken off, yet there shall one head remain that shall strike off thy head ! " Darcy's own head had been stricken

off five years before Cromwell's turn came, but there must have been many who remembered his prophecy, Cromwell himself amongst them. Still, at the very beginning of the June in which Cromwell fell, Marillac, the French Ambassador, who was keeping a watchful eye on things in England on behalf of his master Francis, believed that Cromwell was still in favour—he added, however, that the complexion of affairs was changing so rapidly that no man could tell what was about to happen ; the only certitude was that one party or another would presently succumb. It is Marillac, too, who gives the best account of the arrest. The Captain of the Guard appeared at a sitting of the Council on June 10th, charged to make Cromwell prisoner. Cromwell, in a fit of violent anger, dashed his cap to the ground, exclaiming to the rest of the Council that this was the reward of his faithful services, and he appealed to their consciences as to whether he was a traitor ? Some there told him to his face that he was a traitor ; others coldly answered that he should be judged by the sanguinary laws he himself had made. The Duke of Norfolk with his own hands snatched away the Order of St. George which Cromwell was wearing ; Seymour untied the Garter : Cromwell was hustled off to the Tower. No man said a word on his behalf except Cranmer, who vainly pleaded with Henry that his life should be spared. But Henry had done with Cromwell : Cromwell was no longer useful, and he had become dangerous because of his truckling with

the German Lutherans. He was not even permitted a trial; within a few days of his arrest he was attainted by Act of Parliament, and left to suffer as a heretic or traitor at the King's pleasure. All his titles were torn from him; henceforth he was known only as Thomas Cromwell: shearman (he had at one time dealt in cloth in London), and as an ignoble person the death intended for him was that by hanging and quartering. Cromwell himself made abject and contemptible pleas for mercy. Shrewd to the last, he knew that there was but one way in which he could curry favour with the inexorable tyrant that Henry had become. Henry wanted a divorce from the Flemish mare, Anne of Cleves: Cromwell, to help him, wrote two letters from the Tower in which he gave a full account of the King's relations with Anne since that lady's arrival in England. They are disgusting to the last degree, even when one makes allowance for the broad-speaking of Tudor times. But they served a purpose; Henry got his divorce, and straightway married the girl Katharine Howard. And Cromwell, being of no further use, and in spite of his cries for mercy, went to the block, beheading being graciously substituted for the usual hanging, disembowelling, and quartering. Foxe, the martyrologist, says that he "godly and lovingly exhorted them that were about him on the scaffold," but Foxe, as Dr. Brewer has pointed out, was not an honest man, nor is his famous *Book of Martyrs* veracious. In the whole course of English history, the execu-

tioner's axe never fell on the neck of a more abominable and unworthy villain than when it fell on that of Thomas Cromwell.

7. There was a good deal of blood shed about this time. Two days after Cromwell suffered on Tower Hill, Smithfield witnessed one of those tragedies which amazed Englishmen a good deal and Continental critics much more—the simultaneous execution of Catholics and Protestants. The preachers, Barnes, one time Prior of the Austin Friars at Cambridge, Jerome, once Vicar of Stepney, and Garrett, an Oxford apostle of the reforming movement, were burned alive for heresy ; while Fetherstone, at one time chaplain to Queen Katharine of Aragon and tutor to Princess Mary, Abell, also a former chaplain to the same queen, and Powell, a doctor of divinity, were hanged, drawn, and quartered for denial of the King's supremacy in matters of religion. Some months later the venerable Countess of Salisbury was privately beheaded in the Tower—" for no crime whatever," says Gairdner, " except that she had been attainted in Parliament two years before without having been brought to trial." But Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury, was mother of Reginald Pole, who, by publication of his book *De Unitate Ecclesiastica* (in the views expressed in which the Countess did not share), had incurred the hatred of Henry for the whole Pole family, every member of which, except Reginald, he destroyed, and her eventual execution after long imprisonment was probably due to news which just

then arrived from the North, where Sir John Neville was heading one of the many minor insurrections that broke out in this reign. It was shortly after this that Henry made his much-deferred royal progress in Yorkshire. He had hinted at such a progress in his conversations with Robert Aske : indeed, he had done more : he had promised Aske that as a proof of his good will to the Northern folk, and his full pardon of their offences in the autumn of 1536, he would come there with his then Queen, Jane Seymour, and have her solemnly crowned in York Minster. Whether Henry meant this is doubtful ; he broke every other promise made to Aske. Since then, Jane Seymour was dead, and Anne of Cleves put away, with two houses and £4,000 a year as compensation, and Henry had a fifth Queen in the young and beautiful Katharine Howard, whose morals, unknown to him, were somewhat looser than those of Anne Boleyn. With a considerable armed force in attendance, he and the sprightly young Queen set out for Yorkshire about Midsummer, 1541, and after journeying through part of Lincolnshire, came on August 17th to the southern confines of the county whose people during the previous six years had given him more trouble and anxiety than all the rest of England lumped together.

8. According to one of the despatches from his representatives in these parts, sent to the King before his coming, the North had never been in such a state of " dreadful and true obeisance " as it was at that

time. There is little wonder that it should have been so : the merciless butcheries which had followed upon the risings of 1536 were still fresh in men's minds ; the heads and limbs of the victims still decorated the bars of York and the gates of Hull. The hand of the tyrant had made its weight felt on all sides : fines and imprisonments had been no less numerous than hangings and quarterings. There were evidences, too, of Henry's arbitrary rule which no man could avoid seeing—in the dismantled cloister and roofless church. Already the owl and the bat had occupied Fountains and Rievaulx ; already stone was being quarried from Jervaulx and Coverham. All over the county, too, there were human wrecks—monks, nuns, friars who had been left to starve or to beg ; lay-folk, also, of the labouring class, who had earned their living as monastic servants and on monastic land. Obeisance on the surface doubtless there was, but beneath that surface there must have been—indeed, we know there was, for it kept cropping up again and again until the upheaval of 1569—a vast amount of ugly, seething discontent and hatred, all the more serious because it was repressed. The old feeling of injustice was there, deep-seated ; the reasons of that feeling are well summed up by Mr. Salzmann in his Sketch of the Political History of Yorkshire in the *Victoria County History* : " The religious, social, and political upheaval brought about by the policy of Henry VIII affected all England, but the northern counties in particular. The enclosure of commons

and conversion of arable into pasture, with consequent displacement of labour, hit the poor agricultural districts of the North very hard, and this was aggravated by the ever-increasing burden of taxation. The Statute of Uses which repealed the legal fiction by which the claims of primogeniture were evaded, made the bequest of land impossible, and caused much irritation amongst the land-owning class. The divorce of Queen Katharine seemed to many persons invalid, and the declared illegitimacy of Princess Mary unjust, while the proposal that the King should be empowered to bequeath the Crown was rightly regarded as a dangerous innovation. Orthodox Catholics, who were very numerous in the North, saw with horror men whom they regarded as heretics in favour at Court and promoted to bishoprics. The final blow was the suppression of the less wealthy monasteries. The wild accusations of immorality and wickedness brought against these establishments by their suppressors went for little amongst the populace. The abbeys were the bankers of the gentry, the great employers of labour and relievers of distress, and the entertainers of the traveller. The people rightly foresaw that the greater houses would soon follow the lesser, and a plentiful crop of rumours arose that any church less than five miles from another was to be pulled down, that all church plate was to be seized, and only pewter chalices used, and that fees were to be exhorted for baptisms, weddings and funerals." Certain of these popular rumours turned out to be well founded.

9. All across Lincolnshire (which county he traversed by a carefully chosen route that ran through the heart of the districts affected in the rising of 1536) Henry received, not merely expressions of servility and submission, but substantial tokens of his subjects' desires to sue for pardon and favour. At Stamford he was presented with £20; at Boston with £50; at Lincoln with £40. The folk of Kesteven gave him £50; those of Lindsey £300. These presents were doubtless greatly to Henry's taste; more so, perhaps, than the abject wording of the various addresses with which they were accompanied and to which their royal receiver probably listened with cynical contempt —not six years before, he himself had called the men of Lincolnshire "rude commons of the most brute and beastly shire in the whole realm," and had hanged, drawn, and quartered scores of them, clergymen and laymen, for their share in the Lincolnshire rising. He passed on from these cowed and beaten Lincolnshire subjects to the borders of Yorkshire, where, under the leadership of Sir Robert Bowes, a vast assemblage met him—"two hundred gentlemen of the shire in coats of velvet," according to *Acts of the Privy Council*, "and four thousand tall yeomen well horsed." "To read the modern account of this progress," remarks Dixon, probably referring to Froude, "one might suppose that the gentry, yeomen, and clergy came out of pure enthusiastic loyalty, and that there was no such thing as giving of money in the whole manifestation." But money was presented

to the King all through. The assemblage marshalled under Bowes having made its submission to Henry on its knees, and the usual address having been read in terms of craven adulation, Bowes gave the King a purse of £900. Thence the royal visitor, after a brief stay at Hatfield, hunting, passed on to Barnsdale, half-way between Doncaster and Pontefract, where, in the glades once frequented by Robin Hood and his merry men, he was met by Dr. Edward Lee, Archbishop of York, at the head of three hundred of his clergy. Here there was more making of submission and more sycophantic addresses, prefatory to giving Henry an oblation of £600. From Barnsdale he rode along to Pontefract Castle, and was lodged there for some little time. His own movements at this exact period are uncertain ; Hunter thinks that he visited the Wentworth family at Bretton from Pontefract. There are records showing that wine was sent down from London to Pontefract daily, for the use of the Court, at the end of August and beginning of September, and of sittings of the Privy Council at Pontefract in the last week of August. And from evidence subsequently adduced it would seem that while the King went travelling to other places in Yorkshire, and notably to Wressle Castle, where the Percys were by no means pleased to see and entertain him, he left his young Queen at Pontefract in company with her companion, Lady Rochfort. During his absence, Katharine, with Lady Rochfort's connivance, carried on the illicit connection, already

existing, between herself and her two paramours, Dereham and Culpeper, which, brought to light soon afterwards, resulted, within a few months, in the trial and execution of all concerned. But Katharine appears to have joined the King after his visits to Cawood, Wressle, Leconfield, and Hull: she was certainly with him when, on September 18th, he entered York, the real objective of his Northern journey.

10. York had expected a visit from Henry for some time. As far back as 1537 there had been rumours in the City that the King was about to honour it with his presence. A state-paper under Thomas Cromwell's signature shows that Henry was minded, in 1536, to grant the request made by Robert Aske and the leaders of the Pilgrimage of Grace that a Northern Parliament should meet at York in the following year, to be presided over by the King in person, and that it should consider the grievances and complaints of the northern people: the coronation of the Queen was to take place in York Minster at the same time. This project had been brought to nothing by the renewal of local insurrections and the consequent trials and executions, but that it was under serious consideration in May 1537 is proved by an enquiry made of the York authorities as to the accomodation that could be afforded in the city and neighbourhood for man and horse: the answer was that in addition to private hospitality, beds could be found for 1,413 men, and stabling for 1,811 horses.

And the city fathers of York, " generally clever," says Raine, " at getting out of a scrape," wrote to Henry saying that " if it so may pleas the Kinge's moost royall majestie to com to this his citie, it shal be to all us the moost high cumfurth in the world, next to our Lord God." However, all that fell through, but here, in the early autumn of 1541, Henry was come at last, and between 1537 and the year of his coming, York and its people had shown themselves unruly, rebellious, perhaps traitorous: no wonder that, as Raine says, the approach of Henry was regarded by the citizens with great anxiety. Raine's account of the actual arrival is so graphic and circumstantial that it is worth quoting in entirety. " At first (the York people) were in a flutter of excitement. The streets were to be cleansed, and Coney Street, which was called King's Street, was to be paved at the expense of the city. The fronts of the houses were to be ornamented with the best wrought beds " (one supposes this to mean gaily-patterned counterpanes) " of the citizens. All valiant (i.e. importunate) beggars were to be banished from the city; the rest were not to pursue their calling in the streets. All the members of the corporation were to be vested in violet gowns, and of the other citizens, as many as could afford it were to wear one livery. The registers of the City were searched to see how Henry VII had been entertained, and it was ordered that a scaffold should be erected at Micklegate Bar, and Sir Ralph Clayton, clerk, was directed to compose the speeches which

the King should there listen to. On the roof of St. William's Chapel, close to Ouse Bridge, there was to be a musical greeting of the visitors. The merchants were to place their pageant at the corner of Ousegate and Spurriergate; whilst at the end of Coney Street, near the Common Hall, there was to be another exhibition, with more music. Turrets and battlements made of timber and canvas, and goodly fanes decked with the arms of the King and Queen, prince and city, were lavishly ordered. A cup of silver, double-gilt, and filled with £100 in gold, was to be presented to the King, and one with £40 in it to his consort. All this seemed to betoken an exuberance of loyalty, but Henry could not forget how the citizens had gone against him in the recent insurrection, and he was slow to forgive. The officers of the city began to be very uneasy, and messenger after messenger was sent to the Duke of Norfolk, or to the Archbishop of York, to know what they should do. A copy of the abject submission by which the men of Lincolnshire had regained Henry's favour was read in the chamber, and, in the end, the same humiliating process was advised and adopted, in the hope that they would be forgiven. On Thursday, September 15th" (this, according to later authorities, should be Sunday, September 18th) "Henry approached York, not through Micklegate Bar at all, so that the finery there and Sir Ralph Clayton's speeches were wasted, but through Fulford, drawing up to the city from Wressle, where he had been an

unwelcome visitor. When the royal party came to the Fulford cross . . . the corporation and many of the better citizens, to the number of 120, not arrayed in violet, as was at first intended, but in a penitential garb, 'the most parte havyng newe gownes of fyne sadde tawny onely for yt purpos,' were drawn up on one side of the road, with sixty gentlemen from the Ainsty behind. The King went up to them, and then everybody knelt, and the Recorder made what is called 'a goodly proposicion of submission,' which no one can read in this day without a feeling of shame. A few lines from the document will give the character of the whole of it: 'Moste myghty and victoryous Prynce, under Almyghty God supreme heyd of the Churche of England, our naturall sovereign, being all tymes by the inspiracion of the Holy Goste repleyt with mercy and pety, as evidently haith been shewyd by your Grace to your subjectes layte offendours in theis North partes; and whereas we, your humble subjectes for lack of syncere and pure knowlege of the verytee of God's worde, and ignoraunte of our bounden duty have grevously, heynously, and traitoryously offendyd, whereby your Grace havyng the lyves, landes, and goodes of us wretchys at your wyll and pleaser have graunted to us wretches your moste frank and free pardon, whos bountyfull part and liberall graunte we are in no wise able to recompence or satisfye, but contynally have been from the bottome of our stomak repentaunt, wo, and sorrowfull . . . etc., etc.' The King must have listened with scornful

disdain to these pitiful words ere he swept on with his train into the city. It was only on December 9, 1540 (1541), that a general pardon was sent to the inhabitants."

11. We may be sure that Henry, however disdainful of the York supplicants, made no difficulty about pocketing the £100 presented to him in the double-gilt cup. According to Allen, the Mayors of Newcastle and Hull came to York for his entry, and each presented him with a like sum on behalf of the boroughs of which they were chief magistrates. Still Henry was in a bad temper. One of his chief reasons for visiting Yorkshire was that he might there meet his nephew, the King of Scotland; the King of Scotland, in spite of much pressure and great preparations, had no mind to meet his uncle, and would not come. While Henry stayed at York, vainly awaiting him, he busied himself in giving orders as to the future operations of the Council of the North, and in inspecting the Minster and parish churches. In some of the churches he found ancient shrines, still undefaced; he ordered the Archbishop to destroy or remove them. On September 26th he left York, and after paying one short visit to Sir Robert Constable at Holme, and another, equally short, to Leconfield, he went on to Hull, where he took counsel with the borough authorities as to the improvements of the fortifications. From Hull he crossed the water into Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire saw him no more. But ere long he received a reminder of his visit to that rebellious

county which probably made him regret that he had ever crossed its borders. Scarcely was he back in London when Cranmer laid before him proof, precise and positive, not merely of his young queen's profligacy of life before her marriage to him, but of her recent adultery at Pontefract and at Lincoln with Francis Dereham and Thomas Culpeper. There was no shadow of doubt : once more the King had been deceived. Henry had to meet his council on this matter : " it was long before he could speak," says Froude, waxing sentimental, " and his words, when they came at last, were choked with tears." Nevertheless, Katharine's fair head rolled from the block on Tower Hill one February morning soon after, and precisely six months later Henry married his sixth wife, Katharine Parr. During the remaining four years of his life the reign of terror inaugurated in 1536 continued. A week or two after the sixth marriage four men of Windsor were condemned as heretics under the Act of Six Articles. One was Marbeck, the musician, at that time organist of St. George's Chapel ; another was Anthony Pearson, a priest ; the third was Robert Testwood, a chorister of the Chapel Royal ; the fourth was Henry Filmer, a tailor. Marbeck, through the intercession of the Bishop of Salisbury, and on account of his musical abilities, was spared : the others were burned. In July 1546, in presence of the Lord Mayor of London, Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, the Duke of Norfolk and a considerable number of peers, another lot of

heretics went to the stake—Anne Askew, John Lascelles, a priest named Hemsley, and a tailor of Colchester. About the same time there was a great burning of Tyndale's and Coverdale's New Testaments, and of the books of Wycliffe and other known heretics: Henry's resolve to be Pope in his own country was stern as ever. Equally stern and strong was his lust for blood; when he himself died on Friday, January 28, 1547, one more of the countless victims of his tyranny lay in the Tower awaiting execution—Norfolk, who, in his time, as Henry's agent, had compassed the death of hundreds of innocent men. Norfolk was saved by Henry's death; so, doubtless, were many others. And now that the tyrant disappears, what is to be said of him and his doings? Not, I think, what Froude says and would have others think, but rather what Gairdner says: "Professing to the last a zeal for religion which in early days was not altogether insincere, he had destroyed the old autonomy of the Church, suppressed the monasteries, confiscated an enormous mass of property, and hanged, beheaded, or intimidated all who worked for the restoration of the system he had broken down. In his proceedings he had, to a large extent, gratified zealots who were enemies to all Church law and discipline, and of course he had won over to his side the grantees of monastic lands. At the same time, nothwithstanding the superabundant wealth left him by his father, which was very soon dissipated, he had ground down his people with taxes in order to

strengthen himself against possible combination abroad; he had twice been absolved by Parliament from the repayment of his loans; he had levied illegal benevolences, and as a final step, had debased the currency more than once."

V

THE TIME-SERVING CLERGY

1. Although the entire process of the Reformation was almost universally unpopular in the North, where it was generally considered as a grave injustice, there were never wanting Northern men ready and willing to help it forward, and amongst these there may have been some who set their hands to the work from purely conscientious motives. But if there were such they must have been few ; certainly their names and doings do not came boldly to the front. Most of the men who engaged in the reforming movement, whether as visitors of religious houses, commissioners accredited by the Crown, or agents for the realization and disposal of the monastic and church properties, were either salaried officials or featherers of their own nests by the acquisition of forfeited goods and estates on very easy terms. They were drawn from various ranks of society, and while most were laymen, some were of the clergy. In going through the documents of the period one constantly comes across the names of laymen who, up to this time, had not been particularly well off in ownership of money or property, but blossomed out, when it was over, into evidence of great prosperity. Precisely how clerical lawyers,

like Legh and Layton, benefited, we do not know. But of the laymen appointed as Commissioners under the Court of Augmentations (27 Henry VIII, *c.* 27) we know a good deal : they all got something ; many secured lands and estates in quantity. Spelman, in his *History of Sacrilege*, gives a curious appendix in which is set down, though in very incomplete fashion, the names of the first grantees of monastic lands ; the entries relating to the Northern Province are illustrative of the way in which those Northern men who were willing to be Crown instruments were recompensed. Richard Assheton got a moiety of Whalley Abbey ; Leonard Beckwith got considerable lands in York, a grant of Selby Abbey, and the right to purchase, at low prices, a good deal of monastic properties—he was, says Clay, a great trafficker in abbey lands : from being a—probably quite poor—country squire he became a knight, a High Sheriff of the County, and of sufficient consequence to be buried in York Minster. Spelman sets down Sir Marmaduke Constable as getting the lands of the Augustinian house at Drax and the properties of the Fontevraud Nuns at Nuneaton in Warwickshire, but he got many grants which Spelman does not mention—one at Nun Monkton, others in his own districts of the East Riding. Archbishop Cranmer got the Benedictine Nunnery at Arthington and the Cistercian Abbey of Kirkstall ; William, Lord Dacre, the Augustinian properties of Lanercost in Cumberland ; the Duke of Northumberland, monastic estates at Meaux,

Newcastle, Penrith, Tynemouth, and Whitby in the North, and at a great many places in the South. Sir Michael Stanhope got lands in Yorkshire and far more in Lincolnshire ; Charles, Duke of Suffolk, is credited by Spelman with the possession of thirty different parcels of monastic property. But Spelman's is, after all, only a fragmentary list ; he says nothing, or little, of the rewards of the men who served with the more noticeable leaders—men like Bellasis, Cholmley, Bapthorpe, Challoner, Fuller, Ellerker ; jackals who, reversing the order of things, dined first before handing the joint to their master. Nor does he tell anything of the profits made by professional men like Blitheman, who, as an instrument and agent of Cromwell, and the paid coadjutor of Legh and Layton, and afterwards of the Lawson group of commissioners, probably made a fortune out of the prevalent robbery of the Church.

2. All these men, doubtless, would have found it easy to excuse themselves in anything they did. Far away though Italy was in those days, the influence of at least one Italian had permeated certain English circles. Machiavelli had laid down the rule for the men of those circles—Serve the Prince. They were not bad men : they were merely of the type of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, of whom Macaulay made some remarks which are worth reflecting upon, for they seem to fit well with what we know of Tudor time-servers in general. " To extol his moral character," says Macaulay, " is absurd. It would be equally

absurd to represent him as a corrupt, rapacious, and bad-hearted man. He paid great attention to the interests of the State, and great attention also to the interests of his own family. He never deserted his friends till it was very inconvenient to stand by them, was an excellent Protestant when it was not very advantageous to be a Papist, recommended a tolerant policy to his mistress as strongly as he could recommend it without hazarding her favour, never put to the rack any person from whom it did not seem probable that useful information might be derived, and was so moderate in his desires that he left only three hundred distinct landed estates." The lay-agents of Henry the Eighth, and after him of his children and successors, Edward and Elizabeth, were essentially of this time-serving and pliable complexion. Doubtless they took care under Henry that the Whip of Six Strings did not fall across their shoulders; doubtless under Edward they accepted the First and Second prayer-books without a murmur; doubtless under Mary they heard mass punctiliously; doubtless under Elizabeth they professed their love of the Settlement. But all the time, like Cecil, and like Thomas Cromwell, and like every opportunist that has disgraced English state-craft, they had an eye to their own interests and those of their descendants, and it is common knowledge to any pedigree-expert and genealogical student that many a proud family of to-day in the North of England has its origin in one of those upstarts who from trades-man's counter, or scrivener's stool, or insignificant

manor-house went out to rob and pick when the sacred treasuries were thrown open.

3. And these Tudor jackals were not all laymen. It is somewhat difficult to know precisely how the secular clergy of the Northern Province took the new proposals and accepted the new ideas. In the beginnings of the movement, Convocation of York had been as compliant and subservient as Convocation of Canterbury. But in this the subservience and compliance was an affair of united action—or, as one should say, of corporate submission. How did the individual parson, the town rector, the village curate, the man in a snug place, the holders of comfortable canonries, look on this extraordinary upheaval? When we get to 1559 we can form some idea, more or less accurate; there is more information available about the Elizabethan clergy. But what were the clergy—seculars—thinking and doing between, say, 1539 and 1554? There is a sidelight on this, as regards the North, in Dr. Frere's book on *The Marian Reaction*: after mentioning, as regards ordinations, that the Registers of Holgate and Heath at York contain no records of ordinations from 1545 to 1559, he remarks that "It is quite clear that before the introduction of the English Ordinal the number of ordinations and candidates had been reduced enormously; in some places this was largely due to disapproval of the new ways. Both at Chester and at Durham the ordinations came to a dead stop in 1547, and were not resumed till the Marian régime: the York ordinations of 1547" (this

refers to certain entries made, not in the registers of Archbishop Holgate, where they should have appeared, but in the Vicar-General's book, on an odd page) " are also the last ones that can be traced before 1551." It was in the last-mentioned year that the English Ordinal was first used at York. Now this would seem to show that in the North, at any rate, the clergy, and the class from which ordinands were drawn, were by no means friendly to the new notions ; a further proof is got from the accounts of what happened in the northern parts when Edward VI died and his sister Mary succeeded him. Whether they were right or wrong in doing so, there is no doubt that the folk of the North welcomed Mary as gladly and enthusiastically as the folk of the South welcomed Elizabeth a few years later.

4. But while we may conclude that, taking them altogether, the secular clergy of the Northern Province had no liking for the way things were going, we may be also quite sure that there were men amongst them who had no intention whatever, then, or at any time, of voicing even a murmur in protest or lifting a finger in opposition. Always there will be in this world men who are content to let sleeping dogs lie and well alone, who are not of the stuff of which martyrs are made, and, indeed, regard martyrs as highly foolish, disturbing, unpleasant people. There were many such at this time—sleek men, who, if they ever said anything at all, said, with meek mouth and sly glance, that he was a fool who could not see on which side his

bread was buttered. We can still learn something of these time-servers from the parish registers. Take up that of your own parish ; if it be one that begins at an early period, and if you find that the man who held the living in, say, 1539, continued to hold it until, say, 1560, without interruption, you may set that man down as a prototype of the famous Vicar of Bray. In my own district, in the Rural Deanery of Pontefract, there were several such clerics. Barker, Vicar of Pontefract from 1538 to 1568, described in a certain famous letter as an unlearned man who employed two curates to do the work which he could not do himself, was one. Antony Frobisher, Vicar of Darrington, was another : he, too, was one of the first of the clergy to marry ; he was speedily imitated in this by the Vicars of Ackworth, Smeaton, Fryston, and South Kirkby. Frobisher of Darrington, however, to do him justice, resigned his living as soon as Mary succeeded her brother Edward ; thenceforth, he lived as a layman in the parish, and raised up a family there. But Barker appears to have been like William Cecil—a good Papist at one time ; an equally good Protestant at another. Perhaps he was born before his time, and should have belonged to this twentieth century and its spreading cult of Eclecticism.

5. More remarkable as a thorough-going time-server than Barker of Pontefract was Holdsworth of Halifax, a typical opportunist who, without much difficulty, contrived to keep his living through the troublous times of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and

Queen Mary, and would doubtless have conformed readily to the Elizabethan requirements if he had not come to a singularly tragic end before Elizabeth succeeded to the throne. Robert Holdsworth was a truly remarkable man, and he had an even more remarkable career. His father was a Halifax man, of old family and considerable substance, who gave his son, during his son's early life, or bequeathed to him at his own death, large sums of money for various specific purposes—first to provide for Robert's education at Oxford and at Rome, and afterwards to endow scholarships at Oxford and to found a Free School and two chantries in the parish church at Halifax; Robert inherited still more money from his mother, and seems at all times, from his youth upward, to have been a man of wealth. After studying for some time at Oxford he proceeded to Rome, where he read theology and studied Canon Law, and took his doctor's degrees in both subjects. In Rome he attracted the notice of the notorious Sylvester de Giglis, Bishop of Worcester and ambassador of Henry VII to the Papal Court, who was suspected of having poisoned Cardinal Bainbridge, Archbishop of York, but whose memory has been cleared of that charge, though not of others less serious. De Giglis was an absentee bishop, but he exercised control over his see of Worcester for all that, and when Holdsworth returned to England in the year 1507 he appointed him Chancellor of the Diocese: Holdsworth, who was always of a self-asserting and even domineering spirit, signalized his

coming to Worcester by a dispute with the Cathedral authorities as to precedence, and, through the Bishop's influence, carried his point. Further preferment soon came to him; in 1508 he was given the living of Wolverley, near Kidderminster, and in the following year that of Buckland, in Gloucestershire; before the end of the same year de Giglis gave him yet another mark of his favour—the living of Blockley, near Broadway. At Blockley, Holdsworth had a remarkable piece of luck; in making certain necessary alterations in his vicarage he found a hidden hoard of gold and other money, equal in value in the coinage of that time to three hundred pounds; it was, of course, treasure trove, but Holdsworth gave no report of it to the authorities, though he made a fatal mistake in telling his cousin, Allan Hey, of the discovery. In 1510 he resigned his vicarage of Wolverley, and in the following year his Chancellorship of Worcester; four years later he gave up his living at Buckland. But he continued to hold Blockley until 1540, and according to the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1535) was also Rector of Bishop's Hampton, now Bishampton, near Pershore, which was worth the then very handsome sum of £51 6s. 8d. a year—equal in our money to over a thousand pounds. Probably he got this living when he resigned his cures of Wolverley and Buckland, and was holding both it and Blockley when, in 1525, he was presented to the vicarage of his native town, Halifax.

6. The patrons of the living of Halifax at that time

were the prior and monks of the Cluniac house at Lewes, in Sussex, on whom the rights of patronage had been conferred in 1091 by William, second Earl of Warren. The parish was of vast extent, and was peopled by a wild and factious race; its value as a living was worth at least £100 a year, or, in our money, £2,000. When Holdsworth entered upon his duties two great controversies, or, more properly, quarrels, were going on—one was between the inhabitants of the parish and the Cluniacs of Lewes about the Great Tithes; the other between Sir Richard Tempest, Steward of the royal Manor of Wakefield, and Sir Henry Savile, Steward of the Honor of Pontefract. Blood flowed more than once in both these disputes; what Holdsworth did as regards the tithe affair does not appear, but in the Tempest-Savile quarrel he took the Savile side. And while these bickerings went on, and before the more important controversy waxed furious between Henry VIII and the Papacy, Holdsworth piously obeyed his dead father's wishes, and began to build the beautiful chantry chapel which is still to be seen and admired on the south side of Halifax Parish Church: it was probably finished by the year 1535. In that year Holdsworth came under suspicion. He was reported to have remarked to a confidential servant of his that if the King went on as he was doing, and reigned any length of time longer, he would take from them of the Church all that they had, and therefore he prayed God to send his Majesty a short reign. It is extremely unlikely that

Holdsworth ever said this : it is not in keeping with his character. But in Thomas Cromwell's memoranda of things to be done, there is a significant entry : " *Item.* To speak with the King concerning sending for the Vicar of Halifax." Holdsworth was sent for, and as soon as he arrived in London he was arrested ; his Halifax enemy, Sir Richard Tempest, pointing him out to a Sergeant-of-Law. The Tempest-Savile controversy, indeed, may have had a good deal to do with his London journey ; at any rate, he appears to have convinced the terrible Vicar-General of his loyalty to the King, and his willingness to fall in with the new ideas, for Cromwell let him off with a fine—which Holdsworth himself spoke lightly of, saying that it did not amount to half of his yearly income. He returned to Halifax triumphant, but he had scarcely got home again when he was once more summoned before a court of justice—his cousin, Allan Hey, had reported the finding of the hidden money at the vicarage of Blockley, which money, of course, being treasure trove, belonged to the King. But here—probably because of his recent interview with Cromwell—he seems to have escaped lightly or altogether, and about this time he procured injunctions against his enemies, the Tempest faction, binding them over under a tremendous penalty—£500—to keep the peace—about this time, too, he openly boasted " that he had cast such a flower into the Queen's lap " that he would be " sooner heard at Court than Sir Richard Tempest or a better man." We may conclude

from this that Holdsworth had made a judicious present to Jane Seymour, still a bride.

7. In spite of the injunction procured by Holdsworth against Sir Richard Tempest and his following, the Tempest faction, powerful enough in the parish, left him no peace. The population of Halifax—or, to be precise, of the far-stretching parish—at that period was about 10,000, and amongst them were parishioners who sided with the Tempest party against the vicar. And in the autumn of 1535 we find Sir Richard Tempest writing to Cromwell to the effect that he had had exhibited to him a Bill of Complaint drawn up against the Vicar of Halifax by the King's subjects, parishioners in that place, in which many grave charges are made against him. Tempest specifies some of these charges in his letter; the old charge about the treasure trove comes up again. There is evidence that the alleged Bill of Complaint really originated with Tempest himself and it is significant that of the eighty-two names appended as signatories to it, nearly all are those of Tempest's servants, tenants, or personal friends. The first man to sign it was one John Lacy, of Southowram, Halifax, who was Sir Richard Tempest's son-in-law and his bailiff at Halifax for the Manor of Wakefield. This Lacy, not long afterwards, took matters into his own hands as regards the Tempest persecution of the vicar. On March 22nd, 1536, Lacy, accompanied by certain men of the town, and by one outsider, Richard Maunsell, of York, entered the vicarage, " riotously

arrayed," says Holdsworth, in a detailed complaint which he made against them later on in the year, " with swords, bucklers, daggers, staves, and other weapons invasive," and laying hands upon the vicar " put him in fear and trembling of his life, and violently took from him his purse, then hanging at his girdle, wherein was then contained five or six pounds in gold and silver, and also, cut a purse out of his sleeve, wherein was contained 17 or 18 pounds in gold." After which, seizing the keys of the chambers, parlours, and chests, they " by force and violence spoiled and took away unlawfully as well divers parcels of goods and chattells and divers and sundry evidences of lands, deeds, writings, specialities, letters-patent, obligations, with other bills and writings of great charges." To his formal complaint of these high-handed proceedings, Holdsworth appended a schedule specifying the articles of which he was thus robbed ; it shows that his enemies were by no means exaggerating in their usual description of him as a man of " gret welthe and substance." He sets down as having lost :

Two salt-cellars of silver, the covers wholly gilt. Two salt-cellars of silver, the covers half gilt. One pot of silver, chased, the cover wholly gilt. One pot of silver, chased, the cover parcel gilt. One standing cup of silver, with gilt cover, wholly gilt. Three goblets of silver, with one cover wholly gilt within and parcel gilt without. Two goblets of silver, with parcel gilt cover. Three flat pieces of silver, parcel gilt. Two dozen heavy silver spoons. Three other silver spoons. One great and heavy silver salt-cellar, wholly gilt. One mazer, with a hoop of silver and a rose at the

bottom, wholly gilt. One purse of cloth of gold. Two velvet bags, with rings of silver, wholly gilt, and within them certain ounces of "pays, grottes, and slepers," with other broken silver. One double bag with rings with a chain of silver wholly gilt. Two velvet bags. Two pairs of great coral beads with great gauds, silver and gilt. Four gold rings; one of them a large signet; another set with a "torcas." One remnant of fine Holland cloth, worth 3s. 4d. per ell. One bed counterpane of fine Holland cloth wrought with gold and silk in the centre and at the corners. Eight fine kerchiefs and handkerchiefs. One parcel of new woollen cloth for a cloak. Five horses out of the stable, with their saddles and other apparel.

"Of these parcelles," says the vicar, in his petition of complaint, "parte of them were restored to your sayd Orator agene, and parte of them they have and doe deteyne and kepe from hym as yett."

8. Holdsworth's troubles did not end here. He was hauled up at the Assizes at York in Lent, 1536, on a charge of treason. Acquitted, he returned to Halifax to encounter more trouble. His friend Sir Henry Savile had for some time kept for him a very large sum of money, about £1,000 in gold; he now delivered it to its owner. Holdsworth was at a loss as to where he could deposit it in safety. Eventually, after taking counsel with his sister, Mrs. Maude, and her son, Edward Maude, he buried it in a little brass pot under the staircase in the hall of his vicarage. This done, he set out for London. What he did there, on this occasion, we do not know; he appears, soon after reaching London, to have gone back to Halifax, made a short stay there, and again gone to London. And while he was away the second time in 1536,

John Lacy, accompanied by the previous band of assistants—many of whom seem to have been officials of the local courts—once more broke into the vicarage, and this time stripped it of practically everything it contained. And one of the band, Thomas Lacy, having heard that Dr. Holdsworth " was wont to hide his money in the ground, took a piked staff and struck it into the ground, and at the first stroke he hit the side of the pot wherein this money did lie, and with the pike of his staff loosed the earth and took out the gold and carried it home with him." Holdsworth, in London, heard of the spoiling of his house, but not of the discovery of the hidden gold. Writing to Sir Henry Savile he says, " I am informed of the robbing of my house. I set not 2d. by it. The money that you had in keeping, with all that I have more, lies in the corner under the stair . . . I doubt not but it is in safety, for they have had no leisure to look for it." But he discovered his loss on returning home, and he forthwith journeyed to York to interview the Duke of Norfolk about it. However, before anything was done by process of law, Sir Alexander Emmott, Holdsworth's curate at Halifax, was visited by Thomas Lacy, who first made full confession of the theft, and then handed over the whole of the money, except 26s. 8d., which sum, he admitted, he had used for his own purposes. So it came again into Holdsworth's hands. But he had told the Duke of Norfolk about it ; the result was a letter from Norfolk to Cromwell, in which he said that in his opinion the 1,300 marks

referred to was " none of the vicar's," and that he had sent for him, and that he would " take such order therein that His Highness shall be no loser." Holdsworth, arriving at York in response to the Duke's command to appear before him, was virtually made a prisoner, and had to submit to a long and searching examination about his possession of so much money, and concerning his estate in general. Several people were called upon to give evidence, and there is little doubt that both Norfolk and Cromwell really believed the money to be Holdsworth's private property. But they were resolved to have it for the King, and they got it—as much as they could recover. " I think God would have him punished," writes Norfolk, after explaining to Cromwell why he believes the money to be Holdsworth's, but adding that there need be no difficulty in the Crown's obtaining it, " for he doth not only live covetously and after the rate of £40 of promotions where he may dispend £200 a year, but also is a very troublesome and busy man amongst his neighbours, and hath at this time of the 'sizes two Nisi Prius (causes) against others, and one against him.'" Busy with trouble and contentious business Holdsworth always was, to the very end of his life; he had trouble in his Worcestershire parish of Blockley, and more trouble at Halifax; his vicarage was once more robbed, and he and his parishioners (who invariably styled him my Lord the Vicar) never got on. But he stuck to his living, and he was still holding it in 1556, when, late in the evening of May 8th, two

men broke into the vicarage and murdered him in brutal fashion.

9. It will have been observed that while Robert Holdsworth had a sufficiency of trouble and difficulty in his time it all chiefly arose from matters connected with money. He served his cure under Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Queen Mary ; there were strange and curious changes in Church life and matters between 1530 and 1556, but none seemed to affect him. We never hear of his uttering any protest against the suppression of the religious houses, or the dissolution of the chantries, or the spoliation of the parish churches, or the wrecking of the hospitals and schools : we may take it that whatever the Crown did was welcome to him ; certainly he never had any difficulty in convincing the authorities of his subservience and loyalty. He gave in as easily to the Edwardian changes in religion as he had given in to the doctrine of Royal Supremacy ; when the time came he exchanged the Edwardian rites for the restoration of the ancient ceremonies. Under Edward VI he obeyed the King—or, to be precise, he obeyed Cranmer and Holgate and Seymour —against the wishes of his own people. Mr. Lister, whose knowledge of sixteenth-century history in the Halifax district is deep and exhaustive, says that when the changes of religion were made there at Easter 1549 and service first performed in accordance with the prescriptions of the First Prayer Book of King Edward the Sixth, so many complaints were made, and such violent objection ensued that resort was had to

the Royal injunctions then put forward which forbade preaching for a time, and warned recalcitrant folk to occupy themselves with patient hearing of prayers and listening to the godly homilies provided. But Holdsworth made no complaint, and no protest ; he used the Edwardian rite while Edward lived, and returned to the Missal as soon as Mary succeeded Edward. He was not the only clergyman in that district who kept an easy and a pliable conscience. His curate, William Saltonstall, had been with him under Henry VIII and Edward VI, and continued with him under Mary. He had another curate at Elland, Hugh Gledhill, who was similarly complaisant ; a third, equally adaptable, was Gilbert Stansfield, curate at Heptonstall. These men changed as the views of the Crown changed ; they followed the Machiavellian principle of serving the Prince. And the truth is that amongst the secular clergy there were many, and amongst the regular clergy not a few, who were similarly easy in their adaptability to circumstance. The lay-folk, taking them as a whole, were stiff-necked, obstinate, mulish in clinging to the old ways ; a considerable number of the clergy were not particular whether the old way obtained or the new way obtained—provided they kept their livings. It is small wonder that such time-servers existed in the Northern Province, for its fortunes were controlled and its destinies shaped at that period by the worst time-server of all, a man who began life in obscurity, took the vow of poverty as a monk, and became an

exceedingly wealthy man—Robert Holgate, Archbishop of York and Lord President of the Council of the North.

10. During the first half of the sixteenth century the See of York had been somewhat unfortunate in its Archbishops. Christopher Bainbridge, a man who gained rapid promotion in the Church (Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, 1495; Treasurer of St. Paul's, 1497; Dean of York, 1503; Dean of Windsor, 1505; Bishop of Durham, 1507; Archbishop of York, 1508), was never at York, nor indeed, in England after 1509, when Henry VIII despatched him to Rome as Ambassador to the Pope; created Cardinal by Pope Julius II in 1511, he thenceforth resided permanently in Rome, died there in 1514, poisoned, probably by one of his own servants, and was buried in the Church of the English Hospice. Wolsey, who succeeded Bainbridge as Archbishop in the same year, never came to York at all, not even to be enthroned, until he had fallen from power as chief minister to the King, and when he did come in 1530 he had only spent a short time at Cawood, making arrangements for the ceremony, when he was arrested and carried away southward, to die at Leicester. Edward Lee, his successor, was something of a Mr. Facing-both-Ways; he was timorously anxious to avoid giving any offence to the King, but though he undoubtedly favoured the old methods, and disliked the New Learning, his actions as Archbishop were of the sort that made it difficult to decide whether he was running with

the hare or hunting with the hounds. He presided over the conference held at Pontefract in connection with the Pilgrimage of Grace, and subsequently preached a sermon to the malcontents, first rousing their hopes, and then damping them by a declaration that the power of the sword belonged only to the Prince. This probably saved Lee his head, but he was not the sort of prelate that Henry wanted as ruler of the Church in the turbulent and intractable North. What he wanted the King found in the renegade monk Holgate, and when Lee died in 1544, little time was lost in putting Holgate in Lee's place.

11. That extremely useful and invaluable work, the *Concise Dictionary of National Biography*, gives nine lines to Holgate, and in the course of these nine lines sums up his tenure of the Archbishopric of York in three words : *impoverished his see*. Nothing could be more true—but in the *Dictionary of National Biography* itself there is an addition which is equally true, that Holgate, while impoverishing his see, became personally the richest prelate in England. He began life in if not exactly humble, at any rate lowly circumstances. He was the son of one Thomas Holgate and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Champernowne ; Thomas Holgate was a farmer or tradesman at Hemsworth, near Wakefield, a parish in the then Deanery of Pontefract. Robert Holgate went to Cambridge at a comparatively early age, and after leaving the university joined the Order of St. Gilbert of Sempringham and took the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience :

how he kept them we shall see, in due course. Always a man of parts, he speedily made his ability evident, and by 1524 (he is supposed to have been born about 1481) he had been Preacher to the University of Cambridge, and had become Master of the Gilbertines and Prior of their house at Watton, in the East Riding ; he had also been preferred to the Vicarage of Cadney, in Lincolnshire. And in that year a dispute with Sir Francis Ascough sent him to London, where he attracted the notice of Henry VIII, who made him a royal chaplain, and began to make use of his services in furthering his own ends. In 1537 he was consecrated Bishop of Llandaff ; his consecration took place at the Church of the Black Friars in London : in the same year he took his degree of Doctor of Divinity, and helped in the preparation of the book called *The Institution of a Christian Man*. In 1537 he became a member of the newly constituted Council of the North ; in 1538 he succeeded Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, as its Lord President. During the next two years he was busily employed in the affairs of the North. In 1540 he signed the surrender of Watton, and in exchange for the income from twenty-four Gilbertine houses received a grant for life of all the lands and benefices belonging to Watton Priory, equal to a clear sum of £360 a year. In 1541 he received a grant of arms. In 1545 he was translated to York, and as Archbishop received the Pall at the hands of Cranmer. He began his rule over the Northern Province by alienating to the King 67 manors belonging to the

See of York, and receiving in exchange 33 impropriations and advowsons, Crown property in the sense that these had come to the King through the dissolution of the Northern religious houses. This proceeding greatly impoverished the see, but it put a good deal of money into Holgate's private purse. Some of this money he certainly devoted to wise uses; in 1546 he obtained Letters Patent for the foundation of the Grammar Schools at York, Malton, and Hemsworth which bear his name. In 1549 he married: the bride was one Barbara, daughter of Roger Wentworth; the marriage took place at the church of Adwick-le-Street, near Doncaster. During the next two years the bridegroom had a good deal of trouble in connection with his duties as Lord President; the poverty, the Catholicism, and the turbulence of the North, remarks Miss Reid in her scholarly book on the Council, made it an ideal base of operations for schemers. An insignificant insurrection near Scarborough in August 1549 was made an excuse for removing Holgate from the Presidency, and in 1550 he gave place to the Earl of Shrewsbury. In the following year he had trouble over his marriage. One Anthony Norman came to the front, and complained that when Mistress Barbara Wentworth married the Archbishop she was not free to do so, being already married to him, Norman. A commission was appointed to enquire into this matter, and its decision was apparently in favour of the Archbishop and Mrs. Holgate; local opinion, however, was entirely on the side of Anthony Norman.

In 1553 Holgate bought the Manor of Scrooby; he gave £300 for it, and made provision that it was to become the property of the See of York after the death of himself and his wife. About this time he began to be more active in encouraging the spread of the doctrines of the Continental Reformers, and in 1552 he issued certain injunctions to the Dean and Chapter of York, one of which ordered the works of Calvin and of Bullinger to be placed in the Library; another forbade the use of the organ in services; a third commanded the Vicars Choral to learn portions of Holy Scripture by heart. In that year, too, he was in attendance on Edward VI during the visit of the French Admiral: he went South attended by a retinue of seventy horsemen, and the affair cost him £1,000. He was in the South when the King died, and doubtless realized that with Edward's death his own period of prosperity and money-getting was over. In 1553 he was arrested and thrown into prison on a charge of treason: in 1554 he figured in a Commission issued against himself, Ferrar of St. David's, Bird of Chester, and Bush of Bristol; all four had been monks or friars, and the crime and scandal of their example was severely denounced; the proceedings ordered against them were to be summary. According to Machyn, Holgate, Archbishop of York, Taylor, Bishop of Lincoln, and the Bishops of St. David's and of Chester were deprived on the same day, March 16th; next day witnessed the deprivation of the Bishops of Gloucester and of Hereford. It was about this time

that Holgate said he repented himself of his marriage, and offered the excuse that he took a wife out of fear of Northumberland. In spite of pleas and excuses he was kept in prison, and his rich stores of money and plate at Cawood, at Battersea, and at other residences of his were seized. But on the 18th January, 1555, having paid the Crown £1,000 for his release, he was set free—to meditate. And in November 1556 he died at the Master of Sempringham's town house, in Cow Lane, Smithfield.

12. Holgate, of whom such a convinced Protestant and reformer as Burnet could not avoid saying that he was " more set on enriching himself than on anything else," was one of the first of the post-Reformation bishops to take the oath prescribed by Parliament in 1544 : an oath which Dixon characterizes as " the last and highest refinement in the art of swearing loyalty," and calls, sarcastically, the Veil-Removed Oath. It is worth quoting : " I, Robert Holgate, having now the veil of darkness of the usurped power, authority, and jurisdiction of the See and Bishop of Rome clearly taken away from mine eyes, do utterly testify and declare in my conscience that neither the See nor the Bishop of Rome hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, or authority within this realm, neither by God's law nor by any other just law or means." Now we have already seen that Holgate received the Pall at the hands of Cranmer : the Pall, of all things, was a direct gift, of a peculiar nature, from the Pope, as successor of St. Peter—how did Holgate

reconcile his reception of it with the oath just quoted ? In the York Pontifical there is an office for the enthroning of the Archbishop and conferring of the Pall in which the origin of the Pall is clearly set forth—*a sede Romana*. Why trouble about the Pall in any way if Holgate had—as his oath implies—cast away all allegiance to the See from which, from time immemorial, the Pall had come ? The obvious explanation is that Holgate was a man who had no regard for oaths, and swore one easily ; he had vowed himself to perpetual chastity, and he married a woman whose right to marry him was at any rate doubtful and was seriously challenged ; he had vowed himself to obey the rules of his Order, and he readily broke them when his own self-interest was concerned ; he had vowed himself to holy poverty : we see what a champion of the Reformation like Burnet says of him as regards his love of money. But there are many significant side-lights of Holgate. Like many another time-serving ecclesiastic of that time, he could be as smooth-tongued and as lick-spittling as the best : witness a letter of his to Cromwell : " My suit is to your good Lordship to be a mean to the King's Majesty for the signing of the bill for the assurance of Watton for the term of my life, and thus I am ever bold to molest you with my suits, and can never deserve no part of your goodness as knoweth the Blessed Trinity who ever have you in His governance my most singular good lord." Thomas Cromwell—the Blessed Trinity !—what make of man was this renegade monk who could thus link with

the name of God that of the biggest scoundrel in England ?

13. But it was as Burnet said—Holgate was " more set on enriching himself than on anything else." And he was not only ready to enrich himself but to enrich the Crown at the expense of the Church. To volume ix of the *English Historical Review* (1894) the late Nicholas Pocock, editor of a famous edition of Burnet, and himself a great authority on the Reformation period, contributed an article in which he presented certain documents from the Tanner Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library which until then had, as far as he knew, wholly escaped the notice of historians. " They show," he says " how entirely Somerset could depend upon his creature Holgate, Archbishop of York, for aid in all his designs for the spoliation of church property " : he adds that the contents of these documents—letters—do not add to the reputation of Holgate, " of whom very little good is known." There are nine letters in all—some are of little interest. No. 1 is addressed to Holgate as Lord President of the Council of the North, giving orders for the Proclamation of King Edward VI. No. 2 refers to the release of prisoners in the Castle of York and in the Northern Parts. No. 3 orders Holgate not to inhibit " preachers " until further orders. No. 4 refers to the same matter. No. 5 concerns the affair of one William Craforth, a priest. No. 6 shows the wholesale nature of the spoliation of the Church that was going on, and to which Holgate was a consenting party :—

After our hearty commendations to your Lordship. Whereas it hath been brought to our knowledge that the number of seventeen score and four ounces of silver found by reliques within that Cathedral Church (York) remaineth in the custody of the prebendaries there, and that also there remaineth a whole shrine of silver and gilt and some gold. We think convenient that both the said ounces of silver and all that riseth of the shrine to be weighed by the officers of the Mint at York in your presence, be delivered by the said officers of the Mint by indenture to the King's highness's use, and if the Mayor or any other make claim to the premisses, upon their complaint here unto us we shall so answer as the case shall require. Thus fare your good Lordship heartily well. Your Lordship's assured friends: *E. Somerset, H. Arundell, Antonie Browne, W. Northt, Richard Ryche, J. Russell, Willm. Paget, W. Seint John, T. Seymour, Antony Wingfield.*

From Hampton Court the 17th Oct., 1547.
To our very good Lord the Archbishop of York.
President of the King's Majesty's Council in the North.
Haste post Haste.

The following *memorandum* refers to the above :—

That on the 23rd October 1547 George Gale, under-treasurer of the Mint at York, John Wynde Comptroller of the same and Richard Lee paymaster then received of the prebendaries of the Cathedral Church of York in the presence of the said Archbishop to the King's Majesty's use sixteen score and eight ounces of gilt silver, twenty ounces of parcel gilt silver. The said George, John, and Richard received the same day to the same use of the masters and keepers of Corpus Christi Guild at York, one thousand and nine ounces of gilt silver, twenty-one ounces of white silver, eleven ounces of coined gold, three old nobles coined, one old ryall coined, one goodly hollow crystal.

Letter No. 7 orders Holgate to make enquiry as to a rumour that private individuals were appropriating plate, jewels, and lead belonging to churches in his diocese ; No. 8 is Holgate's reply, admitting the truth

of this rumour and stating that he has had schedules prepared in respect of the goods so alienated. No. 9, the last of the series, is a reprimand from Somerset to Holgate, whom he scolds for not keeping him and his Council informed of the disaffection of the Northern people—another of the multitudinous proofs that the doings of the Reformers were not meeting with any favour in the province over which Holgate ruled. It may be that one cause of the increasing disaffection was the knowledge amongst the people of the Archbishop's steady feathering of his own nest. For it is useless to deny that Burnet was right : Holgate was a robber of the Church he professed to serve. When he had paid his fine to the Crown and had salved his conscience by founding his grammar schools, he was still a rich man. He left the residue of his ill-gotten gains to his nephew, a Pontefract tradesman, who, with it, bought the Manor of Stapleton in the parish of Darrington ; in Darrington Church many Holgates lie buried, and a low hill on the village boundary commemorates the name of the Archbishop of whom the national biographers can say little beyond that he fleeced his sheep and lined his own pocket.

VI

THE GREAT PILLAGE IN NORTHERN ENGLAND

1. Lord Macaulay, of whose convinced and thoroughgoing Protestantism no reader of his works will have any doubt, has some remarks in his Essay on Hallam on the character of the English Reformation and its chief instruments which are of an unusually pertinent nature. " Elsewhere (he means elsewhere in Europe) worldliness," he says, " was the tool of zeal. Here (in England) zeal was the tool of worldliness. A King, whose character may be best described by saying that he was despotism itself personified, unprincipled ministers, a rapacious aristocracy, a servile Parliament, such were the instruments by which England was delivered from the yoke of Rome. The work which had been begun by Henry, the murderer of his wives, was continued by Somerset, the murderer of his brother, and completed by Elizabeth, the murderer of her guest. Sprung from brutal passion, nurtured by selfish policy, the Reformation in England displayed little of what had, in other countries, distinguished it, unflinching and unsparing devotion, boldness of speech, and singleness of eye. These were indeed to be found ; but it was in the lower

ranks of the party which opposed the authority of Rome, in such men as Hooper, Latimer, Rogers, and Taylor. Of those who had any important share in bringing the Reformation about, Ridley was perhaps the only person who did not consider it as a mere political job." A political job !—this is the considered opinion of Macaulay, who, if he had, as Matthew Arnold says, " his own heightened and telling way of putting things," was essentially the sort of man to call a spade a spade and not likely to be put off by false sentiment. The whole Reforming movement in England was, of course, a purely political job from start to finish : Henry made it a political job : Elizabeth made it a political job. But it was never more of a political job than in the interval between father and daughter, when, with a weak and ailing boy on the throne, Somerset carried on the work of destruction which has been well called the Great Pillage.

2. I do not know if that term the Great Pillage was first used by the late Dr. Jessopp. But whether he invented it, or got it from somewhere else, Dr. Jessopp made great and telling use of it, and we may advantageously turn to him for an eloquent explanation of what he means by it. " When I talk about *the Great Pillage*," he says, " I mean that horrible and outrageous looting of our churches other than conventual, and the robbing of the people of this country of property in land and movables, which property had actually been inherited by them as

members of those organized religious communities known as parishes. It is necessary to emphasize the fact that in the general scramble of *The Terror* under Henry the Eighth, and of the *anarchy* in the days of Edward the Sixth, there was only one class that was permitted to retain any large portion of its endowments. The monasteries were plundered even to their very pots and pans. Almshouses in which old men and women were fed and clothed were robbed to the last pound, the poor almsfolk being turned out in the cold at an hour's warning to beg their bread. Hospitals for the sick and needy, sometimes magnificently provided with nurses and chaplains, whose very *raison d'être* was that they were to look after and care for those who were past caring for themselves, these were stripped of all their belongings, the inmates sent out to hobble into some convenient dry ditch to lie down and die in, or to crawl into some barn or hovel, there to be tended, not without fear of consequences, by some kindly man or woman who could not bear to see a suffering fellow-creature drop down and die at their very doorsteps. We talk with a great deal of indignation of the *Tammany* ring. The day will come when someone will write the story of two other *rings* ; the ring of the miscreants who robbed the monasteries in the reign of Henry the Eighth was the first ; but the ring of the robbers who robbed the poor and helpless in the reign of Edward the Sixth was ten times worse than the first. The Universities only just escaped the general confiscation ;

the friendly societies and benefit clubs and the guilds did not escape. The accumulated wealth of centuries, their houses and lands, their money, their vessels of silver and their vessels of gold, their ancient cups and goblets and salvers, even to their very chairs and tables, were all set down in inventories and catalogues, and all swept into the great robbers' hoard. Last, not least, the immense treasures in the churches, the joy and boast of every man and woman and child in England, who day by day and week by week assembled to worship in the old houses of God which they and their fathers had built, and whose every vestment and chalice, and candlestick and banner, organs and bells, and picture and image, and altar and shrine they looked upon as their own, and part of their birthright —all these were torn away by the rudest spoilers, carted off, they knew not whither, with jeers and scoffs and ribald shoutings, while none dare lift a hand or let his voice be heard above the whisper of a prayer of bitter grief and agony. One class was spared. The clergy of this Church of England of ours managed to retain some of their endowments; but if the boy-King had lived another three years there is good reason for believing that these too would have gone. All this monstrous and incalculable havoc, *lasting hardly more than six years*, is what I mean when I talk about the Great Pillage."

3. In Keble's Edition of the works of that learned and judicious divine, Mr. Richard Hooker, there is at page 377 of the third volume a headline which has

always seemed to me an admirable summary of the process of the English Reformation—*Reform, a mere Pretence for Sacrilege*. It is impossible to believe that men like Somerset, Riche, Holgate had any real care for reform in the true sense; it is difficult, viewing the undoubted facts, to credit Cranmer with such a care. From the moment in which Edward Seymour, created Duke of Somerset and appointed Protector at the accession of Edward VI, took office as virtual dictator, the Church was doomed. Somerset himself was not only a favourer of the Continental doctrines but one of those who took good care to turn the spoliation of the church to private benefit; he built his great palace of Somerset House in the Strand out of the materials of a cloister of St. Paul's and the church of St. Mary-le-Strand, both of which, says Gairdner, he demolished for the purpose; there are good grounds, too, for believing that he seriously contemplated the destruction of Westminster Abbey. To him was due the new bill relating to colleges, free chapels, and chantries introduced into Parliament in 1547 as a supplementary measure to the similar Act passed in 1545. That Act, in Somerset's opinion, was not stringent or far-reaching enough; the new one left no loophole for escape. What was the real reason for these measures? At the time of the first, Henry was badly in need of money for the persecution of his war with France; when the second came along, Somerset wanted money for the expenses of the war with Scotland. We may be sure that

there is nothing said of these true reasons in the preambles of the Acts; the reason offered for the suppression of the chantries was that their continuance tended to superstition. The second Act met with great opposition in both Houses of Parliament; the bishops, including even Cranmer, spoke strongly against it, and Somerset only secured its passage by bribing certain prominent opponents. But pass it did, and by its passing gave to the Crown "all and singular colleges, free chapels, chantries, hospitals, fraternities, brotherhoods, guilds, and other promotions . . . with . . . all and singular the mansion houses, manors, orchards, gardens, lands, tenements, pastures, woods, waters, rents, reservoirs, services, advowsons, nominations, patronages, annuities, rights, interests, entries, conditions, leets, courts, liberties, privileges, franchises, and other hereditaments then appertaining or belonging"—in a word, everything.

4. The work of destruction, other than that of the monastic and conventual institutions, really began with the breaking down of the shrines, and the appropriation of the gold, silver, and jewels which ornamented them to the use of the King. Mr. J. C. Wall, in his book on the *Shrines of British Saints*, observes that the State Papers clearly show the real motives which actuated those responsible for the destruction of these once-revered memorials—the principal instruction in ever order for the demolition of a shrine is for the valuables attaching to it to be conveyed to the Royal Treasury. In the North the

work of spoliation was carried out in a fashion calculated to give the utmost pain and offence to the faithful. The shrine of St. Cuthbert at Durham was demolished under the personal supervision of the monastic visitor, Dr. Legh, who had with him as colleagues Dr. Henley and Blitheman, the secretary. From this shrine some sixteen hundred ounces of precious metal were carted off to London, in addition to one jewel which in the opinion of the three visitors and the lapidaries was worth at least £500 in the money of that time. Great care, of course, was taken of metal and jewels, but abominable indignity shown to the body of St. Cuthbert, which, according to the contemporary accounts, was found " whole and incorrupt," and the vestments in which it was clothed " safe, fresh, and not consumed." The spoliation of the shrine of St. William at York was entrusted to Dr. Layton—with at least one consequence which is strictly in keeping with what we already know of him. " St. William's head," says Mr. Wall, " was enclosed in a *chef* of silver gilt and encrusted with jewels. So rich an object aroused the envy of Dr. Layton . . . he petitioned for and obtained a special grant of this reliquary *for the use of the cathedral.* To preserve the relics with reverend care ? No : the man who pawned the altar plate of the cathedral when he gained the deanery, whose personal conduct and irreverent behaviour towards everything sacred in his visitations were notorious, only wanted this reliquary for the riches thereon ; and it may well be presumed

that it was promptly taken to pieces and sold to the highest bidder." As with St. Cuthbert and St. William, so with the Venerable Bede at Durham, St. Acca at Hexham, St. Hugh at Lincoln, St. John of Bridlington, St. John of Beverley, St. Wilfrid of Ripon—nothing escaped. And with the shrines went much else that was beautiful. An Injunction under Henry VIII had ordered the destruction of "all shrines, coverings of shrines, all tables, candlesticks, trindles or rolls of wax": to this was added, under Edward VI, a further Injunction to destroy "all pictures and paintings." And so "thenceforth," remarks Dixon, "began that villainous scraping, coating, or whitewashing of frescoes, and that indiscriminate smashing of windows which obliterated in countless number the most various and beautiful examples of several of the arts; and at a blow took from the midst of men the science, the traditionary secrets, which it had taken five centuries to accumulate." And he adds to this, in a footnote, "I have read somewhere that the breaking of painted windows would have been wider, but for the necessary expense of replacing them with other plain ones, to keep the wind out."

5. The destruction of the shrines was naturally unpopular amongst a people who for many centuries had cultivated the pilgrim habit. That habit will not be understood by the folk of to-day, who prefer a pilgrimage to the public-house or the picture-palace to a short walk to their parish church, but it was a

habit of the medieval age, and a good and edifying one. The excuse for the destruction was, of course, found in misuse of the convenient word superstition. But it is not possible to talk of superstition in connection with the next matter—the destruction of the hospitals. How many people of the present day have any idea of the number of hospitals destroyed in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI? According to Miss Clay, there were, previous to the Reformation, upwards of 750 in England, at a time when the total population of the country was smaller than that of London in 1901. Nor have many people of this age much idea as to what a medieval hospital was. "It was," says Miss Clay, "an ecclesiastical, not a medical institution. It was for care rather than for cure; for the relief of the body, when possible, but preeminently for the refreshment of the soul. By manifold religious observances, the staff sought to elevate and discipline character. They endeavoured, as the body decayed, to strengthen the soul and prepare it for the future life. Faith and love were more predominant features in hospital life than skill and science." In Northern England the number of these hospitals was considerable; according to Miss Clay, whose work *The Medieval Hospitals of England* is full of the results of thorough and painstaking research, Westmorland had 4; Cumberland, 7; Lancashire, 9; Durham, 19; Northumberland, 35; and Yorkshire, 103. Many of these houses were really guest-places for strangers, for pilgrims travelling to and from one

of the great shrines ; some were primarily intended for the temporary or permanent relief of the very poor and necessitous ; some were of the sort that we of to-day should call cottage-hospitals. Out of the 750 just mentioned, at least 200 were given up to the relief of lepers—a proof of the widespread prevalence of leprosy in the Middle Age. These leper hospitals as a rule stood without the walls of town or city ; near the gates of such centres there would be a hostel for travellers ; within the walls, probably in or near the main street would be what Miss Clay calls an infirmary-almshouse for the sick and helpless. Many of these hospitals were of such ancient standing that in the Chantry Surveys they are often set down as having been founded "before time of memory." St. Leonard's Hospital at York, the remains of which are still in evidence, dates back to the beginning of the tenth century, when it was dedicated to St. Peter and was munificently endowed by King Æthelstan ; its name was changed from St. Peter to St. Leonard by King Stephen during his visit to York in 1136.

6. What sort of folk were they who gained relief from and at these medieval hospitals which under Henry VIII and Edward VI were swept away so ruthlessly in order that the Crown might grab the revenues belonging to them ? There is an excellent answer in a poem of the year 1536, written, probably, in reference to St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, and entitled *The Hye Way to the Spyttell Hous.*

The porter is asked "who hath of you relief?" and he replies:—

> Forsoth they that be at suche myschefe
> That for theyr lyvyng can do no labour
> And have no frendes to do them socour
> As olde people seke and impotent
> Poore women in chyldbed have here easement
> Weyke men sore wounded by great vyolence
> And sore men eaten with pockes and pestylence
> And honest folke fallen in great poverte
> By mischaunce or other infyrmyte
> Way faryng men and maymed souldyours
> Have theyr relyef in this poore hous of ours
> And all other which we sense good and playne
> Have here lodgyng for a nyght or twayne
> Bedred folke and suche as cannot crane
> In these places moost relyef they have
> And yf they hap within our place to dye
> Then are they buryed well and honestly
> But not every unseke stoborne knave
> For then we shold over many have.

If this programme was duly carried out—and there is nothing in history to show us that it was not—the medieval hospitals did a great work, and there was no need for their reformation. And the reformation, of course, took the form of entire destruction; it was of a piece with that quaintly alluded to in the *Complaint of Roderyk Mors*: "Your pretence of putting downe abbeys, was, to amend that was amisse in them. . . . It is amended even as the devil amended his dame's leg . . . when he shoulde have set it right, he bracke it quite in pieces."

7. With the destruction of the hospitals went the destruction of the chantries. There is still existent

amongst us of this age—perhaps almost as widely as ever—the notion that the chantry was a superstitious institution and the chantry priest a worthless idler. And so it may be well to consider the following accounts of what a chantry really was, and what a chantry priest was expected to do—taken from the Prefaces to the two volumes of *Yorkshire Chantry Surveys* edited by Mr. William Page for the Surtees Society some thirty years ago: "Chantries were founded either in perpetuity or for term of years. Most of those in Yorkshire were of the former nature, the latter in their certificates are generally termed stipendiaries or services. A chantry was sometimes founded at an existing altar in a church and was often moved from one altar to another; sometimes again it was founded in a chapel specially built, adjoining to the church, or at times in a chapel detached from the church, either in the churchyard or, as was constantly the case in Yorkshire, some miles from the parish church. In founding chantries in perpetuity a license to grant lands in mortmain had to be obtained from the Crown. . . . All chantries were dependant upon the parish church, and the chantry priests usually assisted the parochial clergy in their ministrations, and often had to give some evidence of their subjection. For the most part the chantries were founded by individuals for the benefit of themselves or their friends, but in some cases they were founded by guilds or the inhabitants of a district for the welfare of a community, and, as seems to have been

very frequent in Yorkshire, for the ease of the inhabitants of some outlying hamlet where the people could not get to their parish church in winter time owing to the flooded state of a river or other impediment; others in the large towns were provided for those infected with the plague, which suggests the constant recurrence of that scourge of the Middle Ages; and some again were founded to say the morrow mass for strangers labouring on their journeys, artisans, and young folk. At some few chantries the priests were bound to teach a certain number of children of the parish in which they served. But at all chantries there was a founder for the repose of whose soul masses had to be sung, although it appears from these certificates that in some instances the founder's name had long been forgotten." As for the duties of a chantry priest, they are found—to quote Mr. Page—in " the foundation charter for a chantry at the altar of St. Anne in the south arch of the church of the B. Mary of Badsworth, founded in 1510, to pray for the soul of Isabella, wife of William Vavasour and daughter of Robert Urswick. . . . The charter ordains that a chaplain of secular habit, not otherwise beneficed, should celebrate a Requiem Mass every week and also a *Placebo* and *Dirige*, according to the use in the cathedral church of York, and should turn to the people at *primum lavatorium* in every mass and say *De Profundis*, exhorting the people standing round to pray for the soul of the founder, and he should then say the collect *Inclina Domine, aurem tuam ad preces*

nostras, *etc.*, for the same soul. And every year there should be an anniversary for the same Isabella, on Tuesday after the octaves of Easter, when there should be distributed to the poor of Badsworth 6s. 8d. under the superintendance of the rector. The chaplain was to be learned in plain song and grammar and should be present in the choir of the parish church on every Sunday and festival, at matins, mass, vespers, complin, and other divine services, in his surplice, and was to read and sing as a rector should deem fit. He should not be absent from the said church for more than a month at a time, and then not without the license of the rector. He should not play at dice or other illicit or prohibited games, except on the twelve days after Christmas, and should not frequent taverns and ale-houses at unseemly times. . . . He was not to alienate the goods, books, jewels, and ornaments of the said chantry, but to preserve and repair them and the buildings and other possessions." Finally, if he was convicted of incontinence or crime, or was prevented by loss of a limb from performing his duties, he was to be removed by the rector of the parish.

8. According to Mr. Page, the largest number of foundations of chantries and chapels in Yorkshire took place between the years 1450 and 1500, on the very eve of the Reformation—a sure proof, like the bequests to religious bodies and institutions, that the old religion was still highly popular with the people. He estimates that by the dissolution of the various foundations over five hundred secular clergy were

thrown out of employment in the county of York, though it is only fair to mention that they were given life-pensions of the value of the chantry from which each man was turned away. But there were few chantries worth more than £6 a year; the average value was between £4 and £5. The chantry priests, if not learned, were honest and trustworthy; that they had little opportunity of living idle lives is proved by the fact that according to the statistics of houseling people a very few clergy—from four to seven or eight—had, in towns like York, Ripon, Halifax, Doncaster, Hull, to look after the spiritual needs of many thousands of parishioners.

9. Whatever money resulted from the confiscation of shrines, hospitals, chantries, collegiate bodies, guilds, brotherhoods, and so on, was intended, in some part at any rate, for good purposes—according to the specious provisions of the Acts of Parliament. But there is small evidence that much of it went towards those good purposes. Take the case of the guilds. "The money derived from the spoliation of the gilds," says Mr. Westlake in his book on *The Parish Gilds of Medieval England*, "was never spent upon the purpose which had in part formed the excuse for the spoliation—namely, the foundation of schools. In fact, as a direct result, many schools had to be closed, since the gild funds which had supported them had been taken away. As Mr. Hibbert has said 'The measure was indeed an act of spoliation devoid either of excuse in its cause or benefit in its results,' and

Canon Warren has well summed up the matter in the following words: 'To make such need (of reform) an excuse for plunder; to commit wholesale robbery because there was some superstition in certain gild usages; to spoil country villages of their cups and saucers in order to enrich an extravagant monarch like Henry VIII, or the needy or greedy courtiers who afterwards surrounded a boy King's throne, these things form a by no means pleasant episode in the history of the English Reformation.'" The reference to schools brings us to the question of how far the education of children was affected by the processes of the Reformation. On this point it is well worth hearing Dixon, who speaks decidedly on it—*History of the Church of England*, ii, 226. "One of the most momentous consequences of the revolution (a term which he often uses for the Reformation) but one which it is difficult to ascertain," he says, "was its effect upon education. By most of the religious corporations throughout the country schools were maintained, in which, while the children of the rich might find a ready and accessible training, the prerogative of the poor in alms was never forgotten. Instruction was given gratuitously in these seminaries in singing, reading, and writing, and perhaps in some of the more advanced arts of the age; and the generosity with which they were conducted seems to have warranted the name by which they were generally known, the name of Free Schools. When the monasteries were falling, many petitions are said to have

been received that the Free Schools might stand. But the better promotion of solid learning was one of the chief pretexts of the revolution; and while Henry, Cromwell, and his fellows were destroying these monastic schools, which used to maintain at the Universities the more promising of their pupils, and seizing their funds, they were enjoining the clergy to provide out of their own stipends for the maintenance of scholars at the Universities. The loss of the monastic schools, though they diffused perhaps but an humble learning, was most serious in itself: but it was rendered more serious by reason of the change of which it was partly the symptom and partly the cause. If every class in the community had suffered equally from the loss of these schools, the calamity would have been lessened. But if it had been apprehended that every class in the community would have suffered equally, the calamity would never have happened. The calamity fell most heavily upon the poor: and it caused or marked a diversion of education from one class to another, which it is important to observe. Up to this time, as I believe, the educated class, the cleric class of every grade, was recruited chiefly from the independant poor, the yeoman, the small tenants. Many even of the great clerks of this age, from Wolsey to Latimer, were the sons of poor men. The Universities were crowded with poor scholars. It was not, I think, the custom that the sons of the gentry should go to college. They passed in general from the monastic seminaries to the court

or the castle, and entered on the life of their station without a preliminary residence on the banks of the Isis or the Cam. The famous school of Glastonbury, under Abbot Whiting, was divided into two grades: of which the poorer furnished the students who proceeded to the nurseries of the Order in the Universities: while the richer, consisting of gentlemen's sons, ended their education on the spot and went home. But after this great revolution, the Universities were graced more and more by the residence of the higher classes: who were found at times not reluctant to occupy the scholarships and exhibitions which might have maintained their more necessitous rivals. . . . *The poor had less chance of education after the Reformation than they had before it.* The burden of educating them was, by the loss of the monastic schools, flung entirely upon the Church. Voluntary schools, the gradual and painful creations of the piety of sons of the Church have spread themselves over the face of the country. They have been maintained from generation to generation by the efforts of thousands of unpretending and unrequited incumbents, and still remain the chief dependance of the nation, even amid the educational experiments of the present age." In supplement to this opinion of a learned historian may be considered the statistical information given by the leading authority on the subject, Mr. A. F. Leach, in his book *The Schools of Medieval England*. "Taking one county with another," he says, "the number of (pre-Reformation)

grammar schools per county was certainly not less than ten. This figure would give in forty counties 400 schools for 2,250,000 people (a probably too high estimate of population) or one grammar school for every 5,625 people. Moreover, at least half, and that the most important half, of these schools were not confined, like modern schools, to an endowment of fixed amount; but, having to be adequately maintained by the collegiate body, or the gild, to which they were attached, could, and did, draw on their endowments at large. These endowments were confiscated by the State, and many still line the pockets of the descendants of the statesmen of the day. The contrast between one grammar school to every 5,625 people, and that presented by the Schools Enquiry Report in 1864 of one to every 23,750 people, and even to the enlarged provision at the present day, is not to the disadvantage of our pre-Reformation ancestors."

10. Closely allied with the destruction of the schools —a work which put back the cause and progress of education in England for a hundred and fifty years— went the destruction of the vast libraries belonging to monastic houses and other similarly affected corporate bodies. It was not merely that there was a wholesale and wanton destruction of the old service books— Maskell, in his *Monumenta Ritualia*, calculates that of these at least 250,000 were ruthlessly burned or torn up, but that the priceless collections of ages in the way of manuscripts, chronicles, records, illumi-

nated work, were shamefully cast into the fire or on the rubbish heap. Even Bale, fiery and wholehearted supporter of the Reformation though he was, almost wept over the senseless destruction of these treasures. Those who succeeded to the monastic properties, he says, used the paper from books and manuscripts to clean their candlesticks and polish their boots, and for less worthy purposes. " Some," he continues, " they sold to the grocers and soap-sellers, and some they sent over sea to the bookbinders, not in small numbers, but at times whole ships full. Yea, the Universities are not all clear in this detestable fact. But cursed is that belly which seeketh to be fed with so ungodly gains, and so deeply shameth his natural country. I know a merchantman," he adds, " that bought the contents of two noble libraries for forty shillings apiece, a shame it is to be spoken. This stuff hath he occupied, instead of grey paper, by the space of more than these ten years, and yet he hath store enough for as many years to come."

11. But when the monasteries had been suppressed, the friars driven out of their houses, the nuns from their convents, when shrines had been defaced, hospitals, colleges, guilds abolished, schools closed, and libraries burned or sold for waste paper—when all this damage had been done, the greatest damage of all was still to be accomplished—the sack of the parishes. To be sure, the parishes were well worth sacking. " There is not a parish church in the kingdom," says the Italian author of *A Relation of*

the Island of England, written about the year 1500, " so mean as not to possess crucifixes, candlesticks, censers, patens, and cups of silver "—the English, he says, display their riches more in their church treasures than in anything else. An enormous amount of wealth lay in the parish churches at the time of the Reformation—and few people of to-day, other than antiquaries and students, have any notion as to the true ownership of it. Let Dr. Jessopp instruct us on this important point—a point of the utmost importance if we bear in mind the proposition with which we started out—namely, that the so-called Reformation was a deliberate, calculated robbing of the people. " All this enormous amount of property," says Dr. Jessopp, " (which, if it were in existence now, and were brought to the hammer would represent a gross value of several millions of pounds sterling) belonged to the *parishes*. It no more belonged to the clergy, the parsons, the parish priests, than it belonged to the lords of the manor." Then he proceeds to show how all the treasures of a parish church gradually accrued to it from the people themselves, and after that he goes on to deal with two stupendous blunders about the building of parish churches, which, one fears, are still as much in evidence in ours as they were in his day. The first is that erroneous idea, so common amongst our country populations, that the monastic bodies, the monks, built the churches. There is, of course, scarcely a parish church in England which owes its origin to monastic enterprise

—if monks built churches it was for their own Orders. The second mistake is that the squires built the parish churches. This, to be sure, is a more ridiculous notion than the other, for in the Middle Ages there were no squires. But we will let Dr. Jessopp speak for himself: "Who did build the churches, then?" he asks. And he answers his own question, with the confidence born of knowledge. "The parishes built the churches, and the parishes in all cases kept them in repair . . . the parish had no choice in the matter. The bishops and the archdeacons were always looking after the parishioners. The episcopal registers are full of instances of churches that are ordered to be enlarged, reroofed, reglazed, rebuilt, after a fire or being struck by lightning. The work is ordered to be done by a certain date, and in a manner to satisfy the requirements of the said archdeacons." And as to how the work on the parish church was done, and by whom, Dr. Jessopp is equally positive, and his assertions may be strongly commended to folk of the present day, who, when all is said and done, make a poor show as churchmen and parishioners when compared with their forefathers of the despised past: "The evidence is abundant and positive, and is increasing upon us year by year, that the work done upon the fabrics of our churches, and the other work done in the beautifying of the interior of our churches, such as the wood-carving of our screens, the painting of the lovely figures in the panels of those screens, the embroidery of the banners and vestments, the

frescoes on the walls, the engraving of the monumental brasses, the stained glass in the windows, and all that vast aggregate of artistic achievement which existed in immense profusion in our village churches till the frightful spoliation of those churches in the sixteenth century stripped them bare—*all this was executed by local craftsmen*. The evidence for this is accumulating upon us every year, as one antiquary after another succeeds in unearthing fragments of pre-Reformation churchwardens' accounts. We have actual contracts for church building and church repairing undertaken by village contractors. We have the cost of a rood-screen paid to a village carpenter, of painting executed by local artists. We find the names of artificers, described as *aurifaber*, or worker in gold and silver, living in a parish which could never have had five hundred inhabitants ; we find the people in another place casting a new bell, and making the mould for it themselves ; we find the blacksmith of another place forging the ironwork for the church door, or we get a payment entered for the carving of the bench-ends in a little church five hundred years ago . . . we get fairly bewildered by the astonishing wealth of skill and artistic taste and æsthetic feeling which there most have been in this England of ours in times which till lately we had assumed to be barbaric times. Bewildered, I say, because we cannot understand how it all came to a dead-stop in a single generation, not knowing that the frightful spoliation of our churches and other parish buildings, and the

outrageous plunder of the parish gilds in the reign of Edward the Sixth, by the horrible band of robbers that carried on their detestable work, effected such a hideous obliteration, such a clean sweep of the precious treasures that were dispersed in rich profusion over the whole land, that a dull despair of ever replacing what had been ruthlessly pillaged crushed the spirit of the whole nation, and art died out in rural England, and King Whitewash and Queen Ugliness ruled supreme for centuries."

12. But so it was. The movement that had begun with the visitation and suppression of the religious houses in 1536 and had gone on through the dissolution of chantries, hospitals, and gilds, ended by 1553 in the complete spoiling and sacking of every parish church in the land. Of the glorious and stately condition of the Church as seen in 1530—for it was both stately and glorious then, in spite of all that needed proper and reasonable reform—nothing was left but present ruin and desolation, and the bitter memories of a great past, nor was the prospect of the future at all good or cheerful, for already dissension and confusion were abroad where once there had been unity, and for the people of the North, who still clung tenaciously to the old faith of which the symbols had been broken before their eyes, there was the prospect of persecution, and of the rack, and of the rope, and of the block. In one generation England had been changed, and, as we now see things in the result, surely not for the better. The old Englishmen were

gone, or going, soon to be stamped out. It became the custom to despise them. But if we would really know what manner of men they were, and what their religion meant to them, we have only to look at York and at Durham, at Furness and Fountains, at Beverley and at Rievaulx. The work of their hands testifies to the greatness and the reality of their faith.

THE END

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